BX
1079
D4

Donated
To The Library by

MARYKNOLL COMMUNITY, NY

© DEMCO, INC.—Archive Safe

28293

The Catholic
Theological Union
LIBRARY
Chicago, Ill.

Maryknoll Library

100 net

WITHDRAWN

RELIGIOUS PROBLEMS

OF

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

THE POETICAL WORKS OF AUBREY DE VERE.

Globe 8vo. 5s. per volume.

I. THE SEARCH AFTER PROSERPINE, AND OTHER POEMS, CLASSICAL AND MEDITATIVE.

II. THE LEGENDS OF ST. PATRICK, AND LEGENDS OF IRELAND'S HEROIC AGE.

III. ALEXANDER THE GREAT, SAINT THOMAS OF CANTERBURY, AND OTHER POEMS.

LEGENDS OF THE SAXON SAINTS. Globe 8vo. 5s.

LEGENDS AND RECORDS OF THE CHURCH AND THE EMPIRE. Globe 8vo. 5s.

THE FORAY OF QUEEN MEAVE. Globe 8vo. 5s.

MACMILLAN & CO.

MAY CAROLS. Third Edition, Enlarged and Illustrated. (Burns and Oates.) 2s. 6d.

BY THE LATE SIR AUBREY DE VERE, BART.

MARY TUDOR: AN HISTORICAL DRAMA. (G. Bell & Son.)

JULIAN THE APOSTATE, AND THE DUKE OF MERCIA. (Pickering.)

SONNETS. (Pickering.) 5s.

RELIGIOUS PROBLEMS

OF

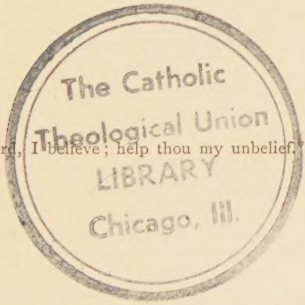
THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

Essays by

AUBREY DE VERE, LL.D.

EDITED BY

J. G. WENHAM.



"Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief."

LONDON: ST. ANSELM'S SOCIETY,
6 AGAR STREET, CHARING CROSS.
1893.

[*All rights reserved.*]

Maryknoll Library

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/religiousproblem0000jgwe

TO

WILFRID WARD

This Volume

IS DEDICATED

BY

AUBREY DE VERE.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following Essays, with the exception of the last two, are selected, with the kind permission of the Publishers, from Mr. de Vere's Essays in three vols., published by Messrs. Macmillan. The last two Essays originally appeared in the *Dublin Review*, and are here included, with the Editor's permission. They have, with the leave and assistance of the Author, been republished in a single volume, as relating to questions of a similar character, and as treating those questions with a completeness and thoroughness that will appeal to the right reason and good sense of many who are troubled by honest doubts and real difficulties, which they do not feel to have been set at rest by the inadequate arguments and answers commonly put forth. These Essays are of a different kind. They go to the root of the matter, and if read with care will be found, it is believed, to enlarge the mind and enlighten the eyes of some who do not wish to be unbelievers, yet are drifting about in the waters of speculation, not knowing which way to go or what to do.

It is under the belief that these papers will be highly valued by such honest sceptics that they are offered to them by

THE EDITOR.

I.

A FEW NOTES ON MODERN UNBELIEF.

[The following remarks were supplied by me at the request of Cardinal Newman, by way of introduction to a work entitled *Proteus and Amadeus*. He was acquainted with one of its two writers. With that work I had no other connection.—A. DE V.]

THE same error assumes a different character when it recurs in successive centuries. The Materialism of Hartley, a brief and profound refutation of which is to be found in *Biographia Literaria* of Coleridge, once his ardent disciple, had apparently a purely metaphysical origin. Much of that which has lately asserted itself, has arisen probably from the bewildered though generous eagerness with which the young have watched the rapid progress of Physical Science. Physical Science has no more to do with metaphysics than a piece of iron has with the north star; yet if a piece of iron lies near the compass, that compass is deflected from the north. We are made up of habits; and where an intellectual disproportion has grown up, we dwell upon certain classes of thought to the disparagement of others, and apply exclusively our

favourite methods of reasoning to subjects to which they are but subordinately applicable. Insensibly some specific opinion, though in reality but an accident of our mental progress, acquires a masterdom over us, even while all that is highest within us turns from it with distrust. Of such a danger this correspondence shows an example. "Proteus" comes forward as an apologist for Materialism: while yet many an expression suggests that his deeper sympathies are elsewhere; nay, that he feels, though he does not know, that within the whited outside of that system there may lurk rottenness. He writes in the supposed interests of Science, and forgets Lord Macaulay's memorable remark, that no amount of scientific discovery has ever affected, or can ever touch, the great problem of Religion and man's soul.

It would be unjust to assert that men of science have been generally hostile to Religion, though not more unjust than the converse allegation, viz. that the vindicators of Religion have been hostile to Science. Our most eminent men of Science, in later as in earlier days, have been Believers. There are unfortunately at present not a few exceptions;—moreover it is to be remembered that the recent popularisation of Science has necessarily multiplied her camp followers, a race more noisy and boastful than her soldiers. There are some who assume that between Religion and Science there must be war; who "trample on the pride of Plato with a greater pride;" and who rival an old Neapolitan's enthusiasm

for the last miracle by an equally precipitate acceptance of the latest theory tossed among us by a scientific Improvisatore. It is chiefly among these that we note a tendency to substitute the servile flatteries Science despises for a reasonable service, and to undervalue all Truth except that special sort of Truth which man gains for himself through discovery. Thus it sometimes happens, that when scientific principles themselves illustrate Religion and attest it, many do not observe the fact. Those who in the name of Science argue against miracles as injurious to the dignity of Law, forgetting that "the exception proves the rule," have also questioned the existence of a God, on the ground that physical suffering exists, suffering which, as "Amadeus" well remarks, could not have been banished from man's world of progress and probation, except by the substitution of special interferences innumerable for those Laws of Nature, in detail severe, though on the whole so conducive to happiness, without which both the virtues and the faculties of man must have lacked their training. Those who maintain that "Instinct" is "Reason" do not perceive that, on that hypothesis man would not stand, as they commonly maintain, next akin to the ape, but find a nearer and worthier animal representative among the tribes of Ant and Bee, whose marvellous social polities are images of his own. Those who proclaim that all the countless species on the earth, from the lowest form of vegetable life to man, have been "evolved" from a common ancestor,

of remote but very humble origin, often maintain, no less, that the various families of man are too dissimilar to have been derived from a single human stock. Those who are zealous about "Natural Selection" do not always observe that that principle has its bearings in connection with a great Doctrine of Revealed Religion. The "Survival of the fittest" means that, so long as life has been known to exist, it has been a warfare; and that to a death-struggle of ages hardly imaginable, animated nature owes whatever it has yet consummated of greatness or of beauty. But the Christian creed has also for nearly 2000 years affirmed the "Militant" condition of man; and proclaimed that that condition must precede his "Triumphant" state. The Christian *Idea* thus included the later philosophical one, and may possibly have suggested it to those who first thought of "Evolution," as the Law of animal life, viz. Fathers and Schoolmen, such as St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas. Indeed, the Christian Idea had one advantage over the later application of it to "Species." The noble Warfare it announced reconciled the interests of the individual with the progress of the race. Every soul, passing from Trial to Triumph, was both a pledge for the eventual triumph of the race, and a help to that end. The Human Kind was on an endless march towards perfection; but each successive generation had not long to wait for its "Golden Year." Those Christian philosophers who first suggested "Evolution" as a

possible interpretation of the Mosaic record, did not regard that theory as a Religious Revolution. Some thinkers who do thus regard it, and who have changed a theory into a creed perhaps a century before its truth can be proved or disproved, may have reason to regret their speed one day.

To disparage Science would be to dishonour one of God's greatest gifts to man. It is to her progress, and that of Liberty, that Humanity looks forward with most trust for her future:—but for their progress, nay, for their permanence, it is necessary that authentic Religion should maintain in the heart of each man, not only a place, but a power proportionate to the power wielded by its noblest rivals, and should advance with their advance. Only in one sense can Religion see an enemy in Science. Scientific truth cannot contradict religious truth, it is often said. Most true; but scientific error can contradict it; and the path of Science ever lies, through error, more or less partial, to a larger and purer truth. Before atmospheric pressure had become understood, it was philosophical to believe that "Nature abhorred a vacuum," and to add that her abhorrence extended only to a well thirty-two feet in depth. Science advances the more steadily for her victories being thus tardily won. And yet in the meantime if the credulous acceptance of a scientific theory, eventually shown to be erroneous, should cause the rejection of a single high religious truth by a single generation, the whole of Divine Truth, Natural Religion and

Revealed alike, might thus be lost to the bulk of a nation—perhaps for ever. Those who care *only* for Truth Discovered, as distinguished from Truth Revealed and Truth inherited, have minds too narrow for a serious appreciation of Truth. It is a larger thing than they know.

To the heedless, innumerable circumstances increase the danger at the present time. Archbishop Whately once remarked to me that prolixity exercised a more deceptive influence than all the sophisms classified in books of logic. In our day some ethical "non-sequitur," which would have been detected at once if compendiously stated, escapes confutation because it is hidden in a work of three volumes. The bulk of the work is on Natural Philosophy; the reader is grateful for the manifold information it gives him, and unwarily swallows some moral or metaphysical inference, so false that it hardly affects demonstration. It is but implied; yet the assumption passes for a proof because it is surrounded by grave scientific details of unquestionable value. A good table of contents might have exposed the fallacy.

Again, it is often taken for granted that an eminent writer on Physical Science must be trustworthy in his metaphysical inferences. As well might we assume that a successful lawyer must be a natural philosopher. I have heard a man devoted to Science assert that the human race now existing, must have existed at least 50,000 years ago, on the ground that certain bones, exactly like human remains, had been

discovered in a geological stratum dating back to that period. He could not be made to perceive that, even conceding the scientific part of his statement, he had unconsciously mixed with it a metaphysical inference for which he had attempted no proof. He had assumed, first, that the bones could not have belonged to some animal race, since lost:—to such a race a bone-structure, more like man's than the monkey's is, would not, even in the opinion of materialists, have imparted the human faculties, in the absence of a brain equal to the human brain. He had assumed next that the bones could not have belonged to a race, intellectual and spiritual indeed, but one whose course had been run before that of man had begun. On his hypothesis, viz. that during many centuries previous to the period of man's existence, as hitherto accepted, the earth was a fit habitation for races more than animal, and in body indistinguishable from man, the existence of several such races before man—or their existence on earth after man's probation is over—would not be improbable, and much less impossible. On the contrary, many persons would say, "We think that the planets are inhabited, because otherwise vast tracts of space would exist in vain: now the waste of vast periods of Time in a single planet, not inhabited by some race with spiritual capacities, would equally be a loss. Should man's race cease on this planet, it will therefore probably be replaced by some new race equal to him in faculties, and possibly like him in body." To

state these alternatives, *as possibilities* and as suggestive of other possibilities unknown to us, is consistent with reason. To affirm their negation, as *a fact*, is assumption. But men who despise metaphysics are always talking "fast" metaphysics without knowing it.

Materialism has moreover this allurement, that at its side are the *reiterated instances*, and those thoughts which carry an image with them. Material conditions alone cannot produce thought; yet material *conditions*, as well as *causes* derived from a far other source, are necessary for man's exercise of thought, so long as man has a body. Now, observing at every moment how much the intellect is affected by these bodily conditions, many persons confound the conditions with the causes; and repetition carries the day. Again, the apparent triumphs of matter over mind address the senses as well as the mind; whereas the distinction between condition and cause addresses the mind only. Matter has thus an unfair advantage in its "dispute with spirit"—one like that of an advocate, who intimidates by his vehemence, and seconds argument with repetition. Spirit, on the other hand, if it challenges us less often, and in a lower tone, approaches us with appeals of deeper significance. A little book called *The Lost Senses*, records the tale of a child called Laura Bridgeman, to whom of our five senses there remained but that of touch. When quite young she was sent to an Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb. Several years afterwards she was

visited by her mother. By slow degrees she recognised certain touches of the hand to which she had been used of old when seated on that mother's knee. She was visibly troubled: gradually her emotion shook her more and more: at last she flung herself on her mother's neck. Few narratives are so affecting as this tale—one of many which prove how completely all our noblest faculties and affections exist in those who, so far as the senses are concerned, are immeasurably less endowed than the animal races. In such cases the affirmative proves everything; the negative proves nothing; but the negative blusters and reiterates.

The argument of "Amadeus" against the Materialistic Theory in his letters is everywhere urged alike with candour and success. He conclusively proves that Evolution, however easily the theory may be perverted, does not itself oppose Man's instinctive and most reasonable recognition of a Divine design in Creation, since mere "Natural Selection" explains, not the remoter *origin* of a species, but its *preservation;* the whole theory, when it ignores a God, leaving unsolved those three primary problems, viz. the first source of Matter, of Life, and of Law. His remarks on the Beauty of Creation regarded as a note of design are especially striking and original.

The scope of the whole discussion is necessarily determined by the conditions on which it was based. "Proteus" demands the evidence of Theism taken apart from Revelation. The condition surely is arbitrary, and less philosophical than it seems. Theism

is doubtless distinct from Christianity; but things distinct are not always separable. Genuine Theism ever included the hope of a Deliverer; and historical Theism began with the promise of a Messiah. When Christianity became man's heritage it remained still the primal Theism, though developed and with the Promise fulfilled. It is by the link next the hand, not by the first link, that Humanity must take hold of the chain. In God Incarnate that Divine Image is palpably set forth which, to the mere Theist, was dimly adumbrated. Why should he who inquires after the original discard the completed picture for the first faint outline? To resemble the Theist of old times, we must, with Plato, turn our face loyally to *all* the light accorded. It was the Cynic, not the Thinker, who shrunk from it into his Tub. Had the higher Greek philosophers fancied that they could make religious philosophy "*Broader*" by making it include, not the largest number of deep thoughts, and high doctrines, which man had reached, but the smallest number only, viz. those in which all, including the most captious and the least clear-sighted, agreed, the Greek race, in place of advancing to the acceptance of Christianity, must have receded to the condition of the barbaric races, which were "agnostic" in intelligence respecting things divine, and, for that reason, were idolatrous in their fancies respecting them.

We are indeed informed on the highest authority that Reason is capable, even apart from Revelation, of knowing the primary truths of Theism. But—and

it is important that inquirers should remember this—it does not follow that all Truth thus cognisable by man will be discovered by each individual man, no matter under what conditions he may arbitrarily choose to institute his search. If he discards the trodden road it is not certain on that account that his strength and skill will carry him to his journey's end, even though practicable by-paths through the jungle unquestionably exist. The Copernican System is a thing discoverable by the human mind: it has actually been discovered; and the knowledge of it has made its way, by the help of authority and of good sense, to the unscientific. It is not to be inferred that any particular individual, no matter how high his talents, who chose to renounce provisionally all scientific authority, and all methods of thought except such as he had himself selected, would be able to rediscover the Copernican System. The same difficulty may arise in our inquiries respecting the primary truths of Theism, if we let go what was once ours by inheritance, not by discovery.

It is the unreasonableness of Self-Will, not any aspiration of the Reason, that tempts us thus to disinherit ourselves. In Revealed Religion we learn, not only the true character of that God affirmed by Theism, but also the true character of man's being, and consequently the nature of those conditions, moral and spiritual, without which his intellectual energies, setting up by themselves, and in artificial separation from his total being, can learn of God, perhaps

not much more than an intelligent domesticated animal learns of Man. If the intellect needs bodily conditions for its external work, philosophy might well anticipate what to some philosophers seems a scandal, viz. that it may need, not less, the recognition of certain *spiritual* conditions, when grappling with its highest themes. The allegiance of the lower to the higher, in man's nature, is at least as natural as that of the higher to the lower. The moral and spiritual conditions under which alone (this is the very hypothesis of Revelation) Religion consents to impart to the human Intellect the highest part of its dowry, constitute a subject which to no truly philosophic mind can seem trivial. Those conditions include most of the virtues, the manlier as well as the tenderer, and chiefly Humility. This is what Science might have been the first to anticipate, since she begins with strictly analogous demands. The man of Science addresses the man of the Senses with a warning that there is no "pride of knowledge" which is not exceeded by the pride of ignorance. He says to him, in the words of St. Augustine, "'So receive these things that you may deserve to understand them.' You assure me that you see the sun move, and feel that the earth stands still. Be not too confident. You are mistaken in both particulars. Science does not reject any aids to knowledge; but she appeals from the senses alone to the senses *co-operating* with a higher power: and the greatest of scientific men said he was 'a child on the seashore picking up pebbles.'"

It does not seem less reasonable that Religion should say, "There is a third region higher yet than those two of the senses, and of science; and its apparent contradictions are apparent only. It has mysteries *because* it is Religion, and deals with the Infinite in the interest of man's Spirit. Let the Reason, in union with those senses, to which it has taught the advantages of a noble subordination, look forth upon larger worlds, through the telescope of Faith. This is *not* to close her eyes." Such is the doctrine of the Newtons and the Bacons. It will remain for ever attested by Bacon's "Student's Prayer,"[1] the reproach of too many who claim to be his heirs, but are not his sons.

As regards the lesser men of Science, some of whom not only doubt, but deny, a God, one cannot help thinking what a stir would be made by one of them if—*Theism having never been heard of before*—he had himself just begun to grope after the discovery, but through appliances exclusively scientific; marvel after marvel, and mystery after mystery, and attribute

[1] To God the Father, God the Word, God the Spirit, we pour forth most humble and hearty supplications; that He, remembering the calamities of mankind, and the pilgrimage of this our life, in which we wear out days few and evil, would please to open to us new refreshments out of the fountain of His goodness, for the alleviating of our miseries. This also we humbly and earnestly beg, that human things may not prejudice such as are divine; neither that from the unlocking of the gates of sense, and the kindling of a greater natural light, anything of incredulity, or intellectual night, may arise in our mind towards divine mysteries. But rather that by our mind, thoroughly cleansed and purged from fancy and vanities, and yet subject and perfectly given up to the divine oracles, there may be given unto Faith the things that are Faith's. *Amen.*

after attribute, dawning slowly upon microscope or spectroscope!

In these days, when so many destined for greater things are unwilling sceptics for a time, it may be well to call two things to remembrance. The first is that, though religious Belief is *certainty*, not probable opinion, it is not a certainty based on mathematical demonstration, which would destroy its moral worth, but a certainty not less absolute and more vital, based on the joint action of Faith and Reason. The second is that, if all things are disputable, this arises, not because all things are doubtful, but because the versatility of the human mind is endless. An argument for and against the existence of an exterior universe, or even as to Personal Identity, might, if the opponents were equally matched, be carried on, like a game of "Cat's Cradle," for all time. Eventually we have to decide to what part of our mental and moral being we will trust ourselves; in what part of it we will dwell; on its heights, or in some noisy suburb, or infected "Ghetto."

II.

THE SUBJECTIVE DIFFICULTIES IN RELIGION:

DOES UNBELIEF COME FROM SOMETHING IN RELIGION OR IN THE UNBELIEVER?[1]

In these later days we hear much about the difficulties connected with Christianity, and even with Theism itself, of which Christianity is daily more and more found to be the sole effectual shield. Those who dwell upon them, whether with a morbid satisfaction or a needless alarm, would do well to reflect on a remark of Cardinal Newman's, to this effect—viz. that a hundred difficulties need not produce a single doubt. Nature is full of difficulties, and most men, except those who would stumble at a straw, know how to pursue their way notwithstanding. We have heard of "an apology for the Bible"; but Nature makes no apology. She says, "Learn of me, and you

[1] The following remarks, as they reply to but popular objections, do not profess scientific exactitude of expression.

shall have bread; ignore me, and you shall starve." There are subjects higher than Nature, the very greatness of which would make a true intelligence anticipate that with them many difficulties must be intertwined; while the thoughtless alone could have expected, or even desired, the absence of such. A superficial age fancies that the wonderful is the incredible, and that the great ideas which for ages have awed or charmed mankind can be pushed aside by "points" cleverly manipulated, or by a "rough and ready" cross-questioning,—one, impertinent if directed against an ancient philosophy, and one which apparently assumes that the religion it interrogates is a "character well known to the police." It is after a different fashion that the difficulties found or fancied in serious matters of belief have to be dealt with. They imply defect, doubtless; but there remains the question whether that defect exists in the creed or in the intelligence challenged by that creed. It is certain that the first teachers of that creed acknowledged the difficulties connected with belief, for they went further, and affirmed that it is impossible for the natural man, without Divine aid, to accept, or, at least, "spiritually to discern," Truths Divine. It is equally certain, on the other hand, that they regarded those difficulties as arising both from the blameless limitations of man's intellect and also, too frequently, from a defective moral condition; for they asserted that there is such a thing as "an evil heart of unbelief"; that it is "with the heart that man believes";

and that the believing heart is under the influence of a grace descending from Him who is the Supreme Truth—a grace that belongs especially to the humble and the pure, one that may be intercepted by even a single serious and unrepented sin, and that may, after having been possessed, be forfeited when trifled with or abused.

But this is not all. They affirmed not only that Faith—a Faith not superseding reason but strengthening and directing it—was possible to man, and was his deepest necessity, but much more—viz. that it was his great initiatory spiritual gift. On that hypothesis, as the optic nerve expands into the retina, so Faith is but the nearer and rudimental part, exercised on earth, of a power destined to be expanded after a glorified fashion in heaven, and there passing into Beatific Vision. Such a power could neither have been regarded as a thing inconsiderable, nor as one but accidentally connected with man's appreciation of Truth Revealed. It is a thing dishonestly unreasonable, while dealing with Revelation, to ignore the hypothesis on which it rests. On that hypothesis Faith is a transcendent spiritual power crowning our intellectual being, as our intellect crowns our animal being; and where it has its perfect work, religion shows itself so plainly to reason thus enlightened and emancipated that not to believe seems a thing self-willed and unreasonable. Such a claim was a strong one, doubtless; but its "right divine" was attested by its victory. The Faith conquered the world; and the world, thus conquered,

bore the yoke of truth as lightly as a garland. A civilisation such as the old empires, which had degraded the moral more than they exalted the political status of man, never dreamed of, planted pure feet on the earth, and placed it in connection with higher worlds. Divine Truth seemed to have become part of man's natural heritage, and "arts unknown before" passed centuries in singing its praise and picturing its calendars.

For ages, though heresies sprang up, as had been predicted, respecting the definitions of Truth, yet doubt as to the Divine claims of religion, natural and revealed, would have been regarded as a pitiable blindness. Men lived in the midst of a great light, its own sufficing evidence; and to turn from it would then have appeared a thing as witless as we should now regard the repudiation of inductive science with all its splendid results. But this could not last for ever. It was forbidden by the very greatness of a religion which, while ruling man, had remembered that he who rules should be as he who serves, and which, while directing, had also liberated the human faculties, and thus consciously prepared for Truth a militant condition, and a series of trials different from those of the early persecutions but not less severe. Religion, apart from the special blessings she had conferred, had also, with an ungrudging wisdom, preserved and transmitted gifts which, though immeasurably humbler, were yet a part of man's inheritance—viz. the ancient languages, with their noblest

intellectual monuments. The highest inspirations of classic genius were by her exalted to an office of which they had not dreamed. Her schoolmen completed what the Fathers had begun. Aristotle conversed with St. Thomas Aquinas, and Virgil passed the golden branch on to Dante's hand. It was not all gain. Had such bequests never come to be abused, the Christian estimate of fallen human nature would thus have been proved a fallacious one. It was certain from the first that the arts of the "Juventas Mundi," though grafted on the Christian stock, would endeavour once more to "wanton in youthful prime," and on a pagan soil. The same thing was certain as regards the old world's dialectic science. The little bird was sure, when the eagle on whose back it had mounted had reached her utmost elevation, to take its little flight and twitter a span or two higher.

Another nursling of authentic religion was likely to turn against her after a time, though for a time only —that is, material science, or rather the rash award of those who occasionally take her name in vain. The connection between Faith and Science is not the less certain because indirect; truth is akin to truth, though they have their "family quarrels"; and the most spiritual of religions has proved far more auspicious to the knowledge of material things than any of those pagan religions which, while preserving many truths derived from patriarchal times and the primeval revelation, grew corrupted through material instincts. Unlike them, Christianity sustained the sacred and original

doctrine of a Creator. The visible universe was proclaimed not to have existed eternally. It was not an emanation from the Divine, nor the Protean clothing of elemental divinities. It was a creation, and the creation of One Whose action was ever orderly, and Who was known to man as the Supreme Lawgiver. A Christian intelligence could hardly doubt that God's material universe must so far resemble His moral universe as to be grounded upon laws, the general permanence of which was attested, not contested, by the exceptional occurrence of miracles vouchsafed only when required by His Creation's moral ends. The Christian instinct believed also that God, who rewards the strenuous use of His gifts, not the hiding away of them in a napkin, had included in the heritage of man that knowledge of the material creation which, in whatever degree it truly enlarges his intellect, must increase his appreciation of the Creator's greatness, and of the creature's comparative insignificance. But here again, on the Christian hypothesis, the enlargement of man's intellectual sphere might well have been expected to introduce him into enlarged regions of intellectual probation, since physical discoveries, apparently though not really at war with some doctrines of the Faith, could not but present difficulties likely to vanish before physical knowledge more advanced, and theological teaching more defined. In the meantime it is only in a serious and entirely candid spirit that such difficulties can be rightly met. But our theme is a different one; we are concerned with the

subjective difficulties men make for themselves, not the objective difficulties they find.

The former class are numerous and clamorous. To many students, as to many statesmen, religion has changed into the "Religious Difficulty." It has become a controversy. And here it must be remarked that the conditions of controversy, however inevitable, are by necessity less favourable to the elucidation of Truth on the subject of religion than on subjects of less moment and less dignity. The objector is free to put forward the whole of what he deems his case; the defender of religion, while replying to objections, has often to leave unnoticed a large part of what he knows to be deepest and highest in the Truth he defends, lest he should seem either to preach where he should argue, or, in arguing, to assume what, however certain, his adversary is not yet logically bound to concede. The laws of discussion compel him also to address almost exclusively the logical faculty in his opponent; yet he knows that the office of logic, in such subject-matter of thought, though a high, is a subordinate one rather that of detecting sophisms and methodising inquiry than that of demonstrating truths—and consequently, that when he has confuted his opponent's errors logically, he has not necessarily a claim on his full assent, though, in proportion as that opponent has a candid temper and a philosophic mind, the "sensation of positiveness," which is sometimes strongest where faith is weakest,

may have diminished, and the sceptic may have learned an excellent lesson—viz. to be sceptical *as to scepticism*. The logical faculty is but a part of man's understanding, which is but a part of his intellect, itself a part only of his total being; notwithstanding, it is to this logical faculty that controversy mainly addresses itself; while, on the other hand, it is the total being of man, intellectual, moral, and spiritual, not a fragment of his mind, that receives the sacred challenge of Divine Truth. Intuitive Reason sits in a higher court than the "faculty judging according to sense," and pronounces with certainty — *securus judicat* — on matters of which the inferior faculty takes a limited cognisance, dealing, in fact, but with their superficial phenomena. It would be absurd if in studying geometry a student were to demand mathematical demonstration on condition of confining himself to diagram and compass, and of discarding the intuitive part of man's intellect, acknowledging none of those axioms and postulates which admit of no argument because they underlie all demonstration, and are certain without it. Equally unphilosophical must it be to exclude the intuitive when grappling with the problem of a God. Yet this is, in a great part, required in argumentative discussion by the essential nature of controversy. The highest truth in matters theological belongs to a region above the polemical, as Theology has ever been the first to confess. This may also be said of the highest scientific truth; but in another important respect these two

orders of truth materially differ. If the intuitions of geometry do not admit of argument, neither do they require it, for they address the reason alone. But the intuitive element in religion belongs both to man's reason and also to that *moral mind* which includes the co-operation of the Will. To demand, therefore, as controversy does, not only such a demonstration of religion as yields certainty to reason at once moral and speculative, and brings peace to "men of good-will," but proof that forcibly excludes all alternative "views" open to man's free-will and insurgent fancy —this is, in a great part, surreptitiously to remove the theme of discussion from its higher grounds of thought and place it on lower grounds. The unbelievers say, sometimes perhaps unconsciously, of the believers, "Their gods are gods of the hill country, but our gods are gods of the plain:"—they demand battle on the lower level; and in accepting their challenge the defenders of religion fight at disadvantage. All admit that it would be unfair to demand an exclusively logical demonstration as to the existence of Conscience, *i.e.*, proof forbidding all appeal to interior emotion, since conscience is, *ex hypothesi*, a moral power, addressing our whole moral nature with all its aspirations and sympathies, its hopes and fears, though it is by no means confined to the region of sentiment, and does not reject the witness derived from experience and expediency. It cannot surely be less unjust to deal after this narrow and arbitrary fashion with religion, which ever proclaims that, although in its relations

with man's reason it is bound to respect the rules of logic, so far as they admit of a just application, its empire is coextensive with, and its demonstration addressed to, the total nature of man.

Let us take another illustration. The material beauty of the earth, apart from all her utilitarian helps and appliances, witnesses to a Creator, because it reveals that law of loveliness to which He has subjected creation. But beauty is discerned through the imagination; and thus a faculty which is deficient in many, and which, when existing in excess, is often signally opposed to Religion, has, notwithstanding, a grave office in attestation of her claims. Again, unhelped by the affections, it would be impossible for man to grasp the ideas of honour or patriotism. How much higher, then, must not be the place in connection with religion assigned to the affections of man! Apart from their sacred insight, even human things cannot be understood. The nobler a character is, the less can it be interpreted by a coldly critical observation—

> You must love him ere to you
> He will seem worthy of your love.[1]

A great poet describes a beautiful character as "one that never can be wholly known," and the loftiest have often been those most subject to misinterpretation. How quickly the eye of love detects the need that cannot be expressed! How often sympathy does what genius without it could never

[1] Wordsworth.

do! To apply this remark:—still more powerful than either the imagination or the affections is the moral being of man in sharpening that eye which deals with the super-sensuous. Long before those memorable words had been uttered, "If any man will do God's will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God," the best pagan teachers had proclaimed loudly that it was to the pure heart and the righteous life that the vision of Truth was accorded. It is easy to suggest that such assertions respecting those indirect but vital relations which subsist between man's intellect and his imagination, affections, and moral instincts, are but an attempt on the part of religious apologists to elude the tests of philosophy. The converse is the truth. The assertion is the assertion of philosophy. Nay, and this is remarkable, such a statement may be advanced even respecting man's appreciation of mere material nature, and will then be unchallenged by those who forget how much more eminently it must apply to that which lies beyond nature. Mr. Carlyle maintains, with no less truth than eloquence, that nature has no meaning to the *mere* physical or even to the *mere* intellectual observer. He writes thus:—

> Without hands a man might have feet, and could still walk: but, consider it—without morality intellect were impossible for him: a thoroughly immoral man could not know anything at all! To know a thing, what we call knowing, a man must first *love* the thing, sympathise with it: that is, be *virtuously* related with it. If he have not the justice to put down his own selfishness at every turn, the courage to stand by the dangerous-true at every turn, how shall he know? His virtues,

all of them, lie recorded in his knowledge. *Nature*, with her truth, remains to the bad, to the selfish, and the pusillanimous, for ever a sealed book: what such can know of Nature is mean, superficial, small; for the uses of the day merely. But does not the very fox know something of Nature? Exactly so: it knows where the geese lodge.[1]

If nature requires for her right interpretation "all" a man's virtues, the supernatural may certainly claim, as it has ever done, that of humility. It must require, however, many others also—the "single eye" of the Gospel, since neither moral nor Divine Truth has a meaning for the sophisticated nature; zeal and perseverance, since the search is often arduous; purity, since it is the "clean of heart" that "see God"; reverence, or else the inquirer will overrun and trample down truth in his quest after knowledge. Above all, it requires a devout heart; for as a heart seduced from the right leads the intellect into error, so a heart faithful to the right leads it to truth. Men sometimes imagine that such statements apply only to revealed religion. They are true not less in relation to Theism. To suppose that this principle applies to human knowledge on all moral subjects, and even on the highest and fairest material subjects, and yet that when cited in connection with man's appreciation of religion, whether natural or revealed, it is but a pretence and a pretext, this is to declaim, not to reason;—for there is a mental as well as a verbal form of declamation.

It is the whole vast and manifold being of man—

[1] Carlyle's *Hero-Worship*, p. 99.

his mind and his heart, his conscience and his practical judgment, his soul and his spirit—that Divine Truth challenges. The sceptic, when proud of his scepticism, insists upon the mighty and manifold problem being presented to his logical faculty alone, and wonders why he can make so little of it. In place of dilating his being to embrace the largest of Truths, he contracts it to a lance's point, and pushes it forth in oppugnancy. He does not perceive that this mental attitude is one that violates not merely the philosophic conditions under which alone the knowledge he seeks could become his, but those under which only it professes to be cognisable. He makes this demand because he insists on gaining his knowledge of things divine in no degree by way of gift, but exclusively as his own discovery: that is, not as religion but as science. He assumes that because religion, like nature, *has* its science, it therefore *is* science, and is nothing more. As well might he assume that nature is nothing more than natural philosophy. If he came forth to the threshold of his house, he would be bathed in the sunbeams. He has another way of ascertaining whether a sun exists. He retires to the smallest and darkest chamber in his house, closes the shutter, and peers through a chink.

The indevout inquirer too often forgets also that even if it were to a single intellectual faculty that Divine Truth presents itself, still the aspect which it wears when thus seen would depend largely upon the percipient himself. Without any fault in itself it might to him

appear either repulsive or uninteresting. The anatomical plate from which the ordinary eye turns with dislike is beautiful to the eye of the scientist. This is because his point of view is that of science. Now, a man's point of view, when he contemplates the great religious problem, is predetermined by all the antecedents of his life, by all its accidents, and much more by all its acts, evil or good, remembered or forgotten. To the mind of man in all the best ages religion has been a matter of piercing significance. To that of some particular individual it may present but a blank or a distortion. More strange still, it may have no interest for him. He is therefore bound in reason to inquire where lies the cause of this condition. May it not be connected with something either morally wrong or deeply defective in his will, a part of his being both higher and more responsible than his understanding! A great philosophical writer has borne witness on this subject. Coleridge thus sets forth the results of his long and profound meditations:—

I became convinced that religion, as both the corner-stone and the keystone of morality, must have a moral origin; so far at least that the evidence of its doctrines could not, like the truths of abstract science, be wholly independent of the will. It were therefore to be expected that its fundamental truth (he speaks of Theism) would be such as might be denied, though only by the fool, and even by the fool from the madness of the *heart* alone! . . . The understanding meantime suggests, the analogy of experience facilitates the belief. Nature excites and recalls it as by a perpetual revelation. Our feelings almost necessitate it; and the law of conscience peremptorily commands it. The arguments that at all apply to it are in its favour; and there is nothing against it but its own sublimity. It could not be intellectually more evident without becoming morally less

effective: without counteracting its own end by sacrificing the life of faith to the cold mechanism of a worthless, because compulsory, assent.[1]

If Coleridge believed that Theism did not admit of a strict demonstration through that "sciential reason the objects of which are purely *theoretical*," apart from the inquirer's "good-will," and in spite of his hostile temper, this was, in his estimate, but because religion stands above such demonstrations. "I believe," he says, that "the notion of God is *essential* to the human mind: that it is called forth into distinct consciousness principally by the conscience, and auxiliarily by the manifest adaptation of means to ends in the outward creation."[2]

By some this is now stigmatised as "mysticism." Why should men feel aggrieved by all that constitutes the greatness of humanity? Those who object to mysteries in religion, whether natural or revealed, object to religion's belonging to the infinite, or else to man's being permitted to have any dealings with the infinite. The finite intelligence is of course not able to *comprehend* in its fulness the infinite. Is it, then, an injury to man that he is raised high enough to *apprehend*, at least in a fragmentary way, such portions of it as are nearest to him and most needful? If such knowledge sometimes strikes upon difficulties, is that strange? Where the finite and the infinite intersect there must needs be apparent contradictions—that is, there must be truths so large that, as Coleridge remarks,

[1] *Biographia Literaria*, part ii. p. 208.
[2] *Literary Remains*, vol. i. pp. 390, 391.

to our petty intelligence they can only express themselves approximately and in the form of converse statements mutually supplemental, notwithstanding what at first sight seems mutual opposition. What mysteries prove is that man's mind has, by God's aid, been lifted to its highest, and that God is higher still. The philosopher who thinks that to him there should be no mysteries does not think that there should be none to the peasant. Yet surely the intellectual difference between man and man must be small compared with that between man and God.

Those who demand definitions on all occasions, after that "stand and deliver" fashion more common among peremptory than profound thinkers, forget that it is far more often through careful description than through definition that the most vital, and the most practical, part of our knowledge reaches us. If our knowledge of things divine remained, even when at its highest, restricted within the limit of exact definitions, a new charge would be brought against it, viz. that it was not a divine truth revealed to us, so far as our smallness can receive it, but merely one of the many petty systems shaped by the human understanding—its creation and its plaything. Were it no more than this, it would include of course nothing that defies an exhaustive analysis. It is a special "note" of divine truth, that although, when presented to man, it does not contradict the higher reason, yet it transcends that inferior faculty which exults only in the work of its own hands. Religion is given to us as our help, not

our boast. It can raise us, but we cannot bring it down. It is a Truth immeasurably above us, with which we are allowed to have relations:—we cannot therefore inspect it as if it were a map outspread beneath us. We are surely little tempted to complain merely because we are allowed glimpses of more than we can measure, and yet not permitted to see, as a whole, a truth which professes to show us but its utmost parts—those immediately needful for us. Such complaints do not proceed from reason, which, just because it expects proportion in all things, does not expect authentic religion to be without difficulties to a finite intelligence. They proceed rather from petty conceptions of things the largest man deals with, and an exaggerated estimate of man's present faculties.

It is the lawless in man, not the soaring, the purblind, not the clear-sighted, which revolts from mystery. Mystery implies obedience in the form of docility. That is just what a true religion might have been expected to demand. It is the claim which Nature makes. So far as our natural life is cast in a divine mould, as distinguished from that portion of it which is artificial and conventional, it makes upon us, in its initiatory stages, the same demand made by religion. It is through a sympathetic and joyous docility that we learn to walk, to speak, to exercise and direct our first affections, to reach out to the rudiments of all wisdom. The process is one from faith to knowledge. It is but mechanical and technical knowledge that is won on other conditions. Sciolists quarrel with religion for

being in analogy with Nature, and for eternalising the youth of our heart. This is a temper the more childish the less it is childlike—one that reaches decrepitude before it reaches intellectual manhood; one that never attains that heroic strength which copes resolutely with the great acts and sufferings of life and death.

Reason knows that man becomes dwarfed the moment he loses hold of God, and that the bond between him and God—religion—ceases to be religion if it discards its sovereign attributes. If it declines from doctrinal Truth and becomes but literature, philosophy, or art, it can do nothing more for man. It can serve him only on condition of ruling him; and it can rule him only through the "obedience of Faith," which accepts mysteries because, though it sees, it yet knows that in the present preparatory stage of man's existence, it has to see "as through a glass darkly." Reason perceives that it must be the function of religion to challenge what is deepest in man at once with a potent voice, and a gentle one, thus eliciting a belief which would be barren if it did not work through love. Reason sees that if religion included no mystery it would inspire no reverence; that in the absence of reverence all its truths would for man shrivel up like withered leaves or be sharpened into polemical disputations; that pride would be inflamed, the heart hardened, and a wider gulf than Nature's set between God and man. Reason acknowledges that it is worthy of God that, in His dealings with man, whether through natural religion or revelation, He should both show

Himself and shroud Himself—disclose Himself to men of good-will, who can walk humbly and bravely in His light, and veil Himself from those to whom the revelation abused would prove but a woe. God shows Himself, and He shrouds Himself, alike in His Word and in His Works. "The heavens are His garment;" and it is the office of a garment both to indicate and to conceal what it invests.

Reason knows her own limits. When the subject-matter lies wholly within those limits, as in science, truth is proved *by* Reason; in matters capable of man's apprehension in part, and yet partially beyond those limits, it is proved *to* Reason. In the former case Reason asserts; in the latter she confesses: in the former case she judges alone; in the latter she sits among assessors. When reaching her conclusions on revealed religion, she listens without jealousy to the whisper of Faith, remembering that, of all God's creatures on earth, one alone is capable of receiving a challenge so high—His *reasonable* creature, man. When forming her judgment on the great Theistic problem, Reason does not decline as irrelevant the witness of conscience. She knows that while conscience affirms a law, and therefore a lawgiver, it is yet so far from asserting its own divine sufficiency that it acknowledges it cannot give man strength faithfully to obey that law. It calls itself but a voice—a voice "crying in a wilderness"; and its power and its weakness alike point to One greater than itself. Reason knows that it is but declamation to set up morality in place

of religion. Gratitude, loyalty, honour, prudence, benevolence, the sympathies alike and the aspirations of humanity, all these have a place in morality; and, like conscience, they declare that they possess interests in the question whether man has a Creator, a Redeemer, and a Judge. If he has, then man's moral duties must be all of them duties to Him. It is not Reason that refuses to take counsel with such advisers. While bowing to Faith in what is beyond her ken, but yet congruous with all her holiest instincts, Reason offers up her "reasonable sacrifice," and receives her reward. That reward is that she is herself received as a subject and citizen into the luminous and measureless kingdom of Theism; all the verities of that kingdom, the existence of God, His unity, wisdom, love, justice, His providence, omnipresence, and omnipotence, all His attributes, as numerous as the faculties of all creatures capable of knowing Him, becoming thenceforth a portion of her heritage, and having their place in her teaching. Theism having become practical—*i.e.* devotional—the true Theist learns that, from the first, Christianity was implied in it; and that the doctrine of a Providence ever prophesied an Incarnation.

Reason detects at once the unreasonableness of the charges most commonly brought against Faith. She sees nothing unreasonable in the belief that an endowment or power should exist, as distinct from the mathematical faculty as the latter is from the experimental, one able, not when obliterating the inferior faculties, but when supplementing and raising

them, to elicit a new and spiritual "discernment," a power august and helpful to man when meditating on supernatural things and eternal interests. Such a gift would seem a most appropriate reward for inferior faculties rightly used and never abused. The denial that this faculty exists, whether on grounds purely *à priori*, or from prejudice, is among the paradoxical notes of a time when many proclaim, on the flimsiest evidence, the existence of faculties by which we can recognise material objects without aid from the senses, or converse with Souls that revisit earth to play tricks under tables. For some persons the supernatural retains its charm only provided it can be dissociated from the glory of God and the good of man.

Reason has no sympathy with a common allegation alarming to men at once proud and easily frightened —viz. that Faith means belief on compulsion. A man may profess, but obviously cannot exercise Faith on compulsion; and, if he simulates it, religion inexorably esteems him but as one who adds hypocrisy to unbelief. To exercise Faith is to believe Divine Truth not only with as great a freedom as Reason uses in other matters, but with freedom of a more absolute order. When Reason believes, on the testimony of sense, in the material objects around us, the mind is chiefly passive, and exercises little more freedom than a mirror that reflects them. When a higher faculty deals with a geometric problem, the intellect is, no doubt, active; but, if it discerns the truth at all, it does so by intuition, and must needs accept it. In neither of

these cases is there either merit or demerit, for whether the truth be discerned or remains undiscerned, the confession or denial of it is alike involuntary. But when man believes Divine Truth, on Divine Faith, he believes voluntarily as well as reasonably, and therefore meritoriously. It is the special dignity of God's *rational* creature that that union with his Creator for which he was made is effected neither passively on his part nor involuntarily, but through a personal co-operation with grace, which, though the humblest, is also the highest exercise of his most Godlike power—free-will. In mere intellect there is often, as in the animal part of our being, something that resembles mechanism—witness our involuntary "association of ideas." In our ordinary and worldly life there is also an element of bondage, for we act, though only within certain limits, under the suasion of downward-tending inclinations, and with a preference determined in part by the balance of earthly interests. But Soul remains free; and the Will, the spiritual within us, when it is a "good-will" becomes the highest expression of our freedom, lifting the reason into its loftiest sphere, and delivering the heart from the thraldom of inferior motives. The obedience of this nobler Will to grace is the "fiat" which unites man with God; and faith, the light of the soul, is the child of that union. The Creator's primal *Fiat lux* was an act of supreme authority; the Creature's *Fiat voluntas tua* is an act of humility, and irradiates the world within.

Faith, so far from being belief on compulsion, is, in the highest sense, a spiritual *act*, and an eminently reasonable act, though also more than reasonable. There is no difficulty in recognising this truth except to those who have been entangled by sophisms, and cannot discern what is divinely simple. The unbeliever unconsciously assumes that the frank acceptance of a creed is much the same sort of thing whether that creed be true or false. He thus implicitly implies that truth does not exist; for if it exists it cannot but wield a discriminating power. Religion affirms the contrary—viz. that objective truth does exist, and that God's *reasonable* creature was created in a dignity so high, and after his Fall was renewed by a grace so admirable, that his well-being consists in communion with Truth, whose claim he has been made capable of recognising:—"Deus, qui humanæ substantiæ *dignitatem* mirabiliter condidisti, et mirabilius reformasti." The creature challenged by the Truth is also a creature formed "in the image of God"; and therefore to that challenge he responds, "This is flesh of my flesh and bone of my bone." Enough has come to him in the way of evidence, not to make any creed, but to make a true creed, credible:—belief is consequently reasonable; but the mind is not therefore compelled to believe: a moral motive is presented to a man "of good-will," and Faith, which is morally bound to crown Reason, supervenes upon it because the will is in vital sympathy with the true, and is not held back by "invincible" hindrances. It is

plainly illogical to say that this, religion's statement respecting the nature and genesis of Faith, is unsound, merely because false creeds or creeds that mix error with truth are sometimes accepted. Such creeds are accepted, not by Divine Faith, but, at best, by mere human faith; and creeds wholly corrupt are accepted by that blind and depraved credulity which "believes a lie." True Faith is not the less true because it is imitated by false faith, just as Virtue is not abolished because hypocrisy is common. The perfect freedom of Divine Faith is a fundamental hypothesis of theology; faith would otherwise lose all that nobility which authentic religion has ever claimed for it; while unbelief, nay, Atheism itself, would involve no more responsibility than erroneous judgments on scientific or historical subjects. A man may esteem Cæsar a bad general, and yet be only mistaken; but if he repudiates the laws of Conscience, he obviously stands guilty unless he has the excuse of an ignorance not connected with the will. If moral faith be thus a duty, and yet be free, why should religious faith be branded as compulsory merely because it is a duty? Is this a just judgment or a calumny?

Reason does not sanction another charge brought against religion—viz. that it is a spiritual "bribery and corruption," and that its votaries believe only to gain enjoyment, or shun suffering, in a future life. This is at best a misconception, and sometimes not without a touch of the spiteful. Religion does not reserve her rewards for the next world exclusively;

or, rather, those who dwell in the temporal world dwell also in the eternal, eternity not being a prolongation of time, but a vaster sphere clasping a smaller one, and reaching with its penetrating influences to creatures enclosed at once within both. It is a commonplace of theology that the Christian seeks the Cross, and commonly finds it; while yet the consolations of religion not only exist for those who dwell upon earth, but are granted in their higher degrees to those who have most of earthly suffering. Moreover, the desire of heaven is not a spiritual form of selfishness. On the contrary, it is the only effectual cure for selfishness. The selfish man makes himself the centre of his universe, loving little besides, except so far as the love of others can minister to self-love: but heaven is not an earth improved for the help of specious baseness; it is the "Beatific Vision" which draws the beholder into Itself, renewing the creature after the Divine Image, while it also makes him realise that merely relative and dependent character which belongs to all merely creaturely existence. In that Vision individual self-love is lost, while true Personality, far from being even merged, is developed to the utmost. The desire of heaven, that is, the love of God and the belief that the highest good must consist in the fruition of the Uncreated Good, is not founded on any calculation of interests, but is a primary spiritual instinct. The converse fear is also a primary instinct of our spiritual being, and one of which the animalised nature seems incapable. It is the fear of an eternal

exile from the supreme Good and the supreme Love —an exile self-inflicted by an eternal hate.

If it be objected that the promised reward of righteousness, in the present or a future life, destroys the disinterestedness of religion, it suffices to reply that the cavil might be raised equally against virtue, since "virtue is its own reward," and against disinterestedness itself, since disinterestedness is man's sole protection from many of his heaviest trials. Who would affirm that filial love means but the child's selfish desire for parental protection, and that parental love is but the parent's intention to enjoy his children's reverence, or their aid in his old age? Fame and power are among the rewards of good actions done for man's behoof; yet it is not true that those actions are done only, or chiefly, or need be done at all, "for pay." Those who look only at the wrong side of the tapestry can see nothing save the stuck-out ends of threads; but they are not philosophers on that account. A world in which there existed no connection between happiness and excellence would be a world in which happiness must chiefly spring from, and gravitate towards, evil—a belief which would *implicitly* deny the existence of a Creator Himself at once all-blessed and all-good. The aspiration after a love for God wholly disinterested has seldom been expressed with such ardour as in the celebrated Hymn of St. Francis Xavier, who, notwithstanding, believed the Saviour's promise that the humblest good action shall "not lack its reward";

and those who disclaim all religious fear, on the ground that "perfect love casteth out fear," are claiming for themselves perfection—where it is least likely to exist.

Another popular charge against religion, while one that reason repudiates as sophistic, is one which vanity and weakness are especially intimidated by—viz. the charge that Faith is feebleness. Reason perceives that if Faith exists at all, it must, on the contrary, be a strenuous energy. To it belongs not only the gift of spiritual discernment, but that of daring. It is the great spiritual venture, launching forth "in search of new worlds beyond the deep." Like virtue, it is a virile gift. One of the failings which chiefly produces lack of Faith is lack of courage. Faith is a power; and as, in history, it has wrestled with all the powers of this world, so, in the history of a soul, it wrestles with Powers unseen. Man, even subsequent to the Fall, is, except where a second Fall has drawn him down beneath the level of fallen nature, a religious being—one who has the strength that endures long kneeling, as well as the power of sitting or lying still. He has a soul, as well as a mind and a body. Religion is a strong soul's commerce with God, as scientific thought is the strong mind's commerce with scientific truth, and bodily labour is the strong hand's commerce with nature. That sacred commerce belongs to the soul at once through the submission and the dauntless energy of Faith. The entire and final loss of that Faith is to the soul what

imbecility is to our mental, and torpor to our animal being. In its last stage, it is the barrenness of a soul that has not "strength to bring forth" truth. It is no error of strength: it is either the restless feebleness of the world's premature senility, or a malady perhaps but temporary.

Whenever, yielding thus to spiritual weakness, man has relaxed his grasp upon Truth once his, he has commonly been soon after found running upon the downward trails of the old pagan philosophies—a circumstance full of significance. The most irrational of these was the theory which accounted for the universe in its present form by a "fortuitous concurrence of atoms." It would be absurd to impute such a theory to all those who believe in Evolution, for that theory fully admits that, outside what it accounts for, there remain three problems wholly unsolved —viz. the origin of the first matter, of life, and of law, including the laws connected with Evolution. To the theistic evolutionist these three problems are solved by that which "Evolution," if it does not teach, yet does not deny—viz. the existence of a Divine Creator. Matter cannot be eternal; but God, if a man takes in the idea at all, cannot be thought of as other than eternal. He who is the Eternal Existence has created the first matter; He who has life in Himself has created life; and He who is the Supreme Lawgiver has subjected matter and life to the laws they obey. But all evolutionists are not theists; and the atheistic form of Evolution, abjuring the support which a

philosophic evolution derives, as some maintain, from Theism, involves in a more pretentious form an absurdity quite as great as a fortuitous concurrence of atoms—viz. the dogma that a Matter self-subsisting, and quickened by a Life never imparted, obeys a Law never imposed upon it. Again, the most abject of the ancient philosophies was the cynical, which selected the tub for its temple. But not less cynical is that modern materialism (Carlyle would have called it "hog-wash") which, disbelieving in the existence of soul, makes man a mere animal, and educes whatever he thinks or feels out of a perishable material organisation. If man were indeed but the most intellectual of animals, he would be the worst, since he would be the only animal that sins. Among the forms of modern cynicism the chief is that of "Agnosticism," which does not deny that a God may exist, but affirms that, even on that supposition, man must remain ignorant of His existence, adding that knowledge on that subject, or the kindred subject of man's immortality, is needless, such themes being amongst those respecting which a healthy mind will feel little curiosity and no distress. The diseased limb feels no distress when the period of mortification has set in, and that of dissolution is imminent; and yet mortification is not thought a healthy condition. The paganism of old times, till its season of mortification had arrived, would have despised a contented Agnosticism; for with the hopes and the yearnings derived from a belief in immortality was interwoven whatever was

great in the arts or acts of antiquity. The child is no Agnostic; like the peasant, he is ignorant of many things irrelevant; but he "delightedly believes" in things divine. "Agnostic" is a Greek word, signifying much the same as a time-honoured one derived from the Latin—viz., "Ignoramus"; and one hardly sees why the invention of this new term should be considered as so great a flight of modern philosophy. Contemporaneously with these metaphysical systems there have too often been put forward ethical theories which it would be unjust to charge upon any large school of thought, but which notwithstanding carry with them unequivocal warnings to several schools. They have vindicated suicide, infanticide, the putting to death of persons in hopeless disease, and much besides of a character worse still, which painfully recalls the lowest ages of paganism. The books propounding them have been publicly sold in the streets, and defended in the courts of justice. A boastful age is not without cause for misgivings, and may one day find cause to be grateful for humiliations!

One would have thought that the primary mathematical truths at least must ever occupy an unassailable place; but those who are old-fashioned enough still to believe in the universal and absolute character of geometry are now named as the followers of a special "intuitional school" by persons who ascribe, astonishing as this may seem, our knowledge of abstract, not less than of physical science, to experience, not to reason, and who affirm that in other planets a larger

experience may contradict the assertions which it makes in ours, such as that two and two must invariably amount to the same as three and one, and that the angles of a triangle must in every case be equal to two right angles! Once more, personal identity might be supposed proof against cavil; but passages[1] may be found in recent books, which mean—if they possess a meaning—that man's moral existence is but an on-flowing stream of sensations, thoughts, and purposes, not ruled by any independent and personal will, but necessarily winding in the channel moulded for them by irresistible motive and external circumstance.

Scarcely less strange are the conclusions of a certain new philosophy, "Positivism," which regards itself as the high-water mark of all systems. It informs us that it was but an extravagance of the human race, in its childhood, which made man turn his attention to things *above* us; that the same race, only a little wiser in its youth, had then indulged in the study of things *within* us, ethics and metaphysics; but that, mature at last, it has now discovered that the one proper object of investigation lies *around* us, viz. material nature. This materialism it calls "Good Sense." Fraudulent nomenclature is one of those fine arts in which false science is an adept. It deserves a sterner censure than most errors, though one confined to those who invented it, and not extended to those who, themselves ensnared, use it unwittingly. It has its alluring side. It praises

[1] Several such passages are quoted in Mr. Kirkman's *Philosophy without Assumptions*.

"truth," but truth in its tongue means but truth scientifically discovered—a small portion of what it means elsewhere. It praises the love of truth: but it loves truth so little that it prefers the search after truth to the possession and use of truth, alleging often that the very claim to Revealed Truth is an unworthy one, because it implies a restriction on inquiry. It praises "culture"; but the term, in its cant sense, excludes most thinkers of our time, though highest in art, science, and letters, who have remained believers in the Bible, and includes in its brevet promotion all who believe in the latest theory of Biblical criticism. It boasts its "free thought"; but the "thought" thus lauded is not deep; and the "freedom" does not include a freedom from that presumption which most impedes sound thought, or even from that cowardice which trembles at the charge of "obscurantism." Fraudulent nomenclature has also its cautious side. Working its way through books and journals read by believers as well as by unbelievers, it is skilful not to shock: besides its strong meat for men, it has milk for those who are still but babes in unbelief, draws distinctions between atheism and "dogmatic atheism," and asserts that to admit a God is not to admit a personal God, but only a Force that may exist impersonally, like the law of gravitation. Theists, of course, ascribe to God, but in a transcendent sense as well as degree, attributes such as love, wisdom, justice, holiness, power, which, in a sense and degree immeasurably lower, exist in man also simply because man was made in God's

image:—the new nomenclature, inverting the truth, has the assurance to stigmatise such an ascription, in the absence of which the term God could represent no idea and make no appeal either to the moral reason or the human heart, as man's creation of a God after *his* own image, and nicknames it "anthropomorphism." "Positivism" has carried this new nomenclature to its utmost extreme. It does not deny a "Grand Etre"; it only denies that he is God. The "Grand Etre" is Humanity: the individuals of the human race perish and vanish, but Humanity remains: it is to be worshipped; and an elaborate system of rites and festivals has been instituted for that worship! This system is certainly original, for it combines atheism with idolatry—viz. worship, the highest it has to give, of that which is not God; and it unites both with a practice as anomalous in the eye of reason as of faith—viz. the adoration of that which has no actual existence; since, apart from the individuals it supposes to pass into nothingness, Humanity is but a collective name.

A word on the ideal end of this philosophy. Assuming its eventual prevalence and the success of its aims, man would have finally put aside all hope of attaining knowledge respecting things divine, and also all belief in the soul's immortality. On the other hand, he would have perfected his knowledge of nature, and his mastery over the material universe. Let us assume also that he had banished diseases, greatly improved civil government, and lengthened

human life. What does the triumph amount to? The narrowing of man's being by the extinction of its spiritual part and the enlarged possession of all those things which, apart from things spiritual, are nothings! The human affections, as distinguished from animal instincts, if we believed that the objects of them must moulder for ever in the dust, would eventually, and after a piteous struggle, either shrivel up and wither away, or survive but to mock us; and we should envy the animal races among which affections are, as for such they should be, evanescent. Unfountained from above, the higher moral virtues would clothe themselves with decay for lack of a meaning; and the imaginative arts would dwindle in sympathy with that decline. Our perfected knowledge of physical science, when nothing connected with it remained to be known, would waken neither our energies nor our admiration; nay, possibly, when we had learned how to "put a girdle round the earth in forty minutes," our last discovery might be that we had changed our planet to an asteroid and our palace to a prison. If a human aspiration remained, the victories of material knowledge would but intensify our grief at the invincible barrier placed by Fate between us and all spiritual knowledge. Barbaric races live in a twilight region of intellect, clasped by a boundless horizon of twilight hope:—the "perfected" condition of the false philosophy and the foolish philanthropy would abide in a blinding glare of knowledge respecting matters barren to the soul and to the heart, encompassed by the very

blackness of darkness respecting all those which are precious whether to the human and moral affections or to the spirit. The contrast would make the loss intolerable. Man would walk upon an earth all ashes, and under a heaven all iron. The ideal of the Positivist philosophy would be the nearest definition of that hell which Christian philosophy, by no means bound to interpret *literally* Scriptural expressions, one of which is obviously metaphorical, has found it difficult hitherto to define. And yet this immeasurable despair would be but a misplaced, stunted, and vitiated fragment of that boundless Christian Hope, which includes in its heaven, not lost in a Divine Fruition mightier yet, the perfection of every knowledge separated from the error mixed with earthly knowledge, and graduated aright amid the hierarchy of the knowledges; and which includes not less the perfection of every high and pure affection, cleansed from mortal dross, separated from what was temporary in its purpose, and exalted, not lowered by just subordination in the hierarchy of love.

At a time when "Progress" is the cry, and "We will charge you with reaction" is the threat, it may be well to remark that there is such a thing as progress neither upward nor onward, but downward, and such a thing as reaction in favour practically of ages both remoter and blinder than those traduced by the aspersion that they were "dark ages." In defence of such progress is raised another popular cry, "Beware of tradition," "Beware of prepossessions." This is also a cry to

which reason can give but a limited consent. Whatever knowledge has been attained, or will ever be attained, must needs be transmitted by parents to their children, and therefore must reach remote generations largely as a tradition, without on that account forfeiting the benefit of that evidence, whether external or internal, by which it is authenticated. Humanity itself is a tradition, and cannot separate itself from the conditions of an historical existence: and though philosophy, no less than religion, protests against "traditions *of men*," it condemns by that term only those local and partial traditions of the clique, the school, or the nation, which make void a larger truth at once attested by reason, and brought home by the universal consent of men, as part of the human heritage to individual man at a period when he is as yet too young adequately to test, though yet he feels, its reasonableness. Moral prepossessions we must have, because the best thoughts of the best ages, when sifted by time, mould our beings from the first, and because, if we had not moral prepossessions, we should have immoral. Should "Agnosticism" last long enough to become a tradition, the child born in that sect will start with prepossessions, such as that "truth" is "what each of us troweth," and that "liberty" consists in our having always an equal and undisputed choice between alternatives, not in our willingly and gladly, and by no means on compulsion, believing the true and doing the right. If we discarded "prepossessions," we should enter on the study of morals without the admission of any responsibility

on our part, and to that of history without any preference for the just ruler above the tyrant. Man could never have made a beginning of natural philosophy if he had not come to it with that high prepossession, the idea of Law: and, as Bacon reminds us, the *prudens interrogatio* is necessary if we would elicit from Nature more than the fool's answer. If prepossessions are thus preconditions for natural and for moral philosophy, are they intrusive in a religion which has lasted for centuries, and moulded a world?

As superficial is another allegation often made—viz. "Religion but solves the riddles of existence by resolving them into another riddle as inexplicable." Were it true that it only resolved the many into one, it would so far have followed the aspiration of philosophy, which is to resolve phenomena into laws, and laws into a single law, and which knows that the ultimate ground of all must remain inexplicable to science,—the craving of which is limitless, and to which an "ultimate" would be defeat, not triumph. But this is the least part of the sophism. Religion does not substitute riddles for riddles. She answers a thousand painful riddles, each of them a sphinx ready to devour us, by lifting them into a higher region; and she resolves them, as has been well said by Auguste Nicolas,[1] into one sunlike Mystery, which, if itself too bright to be scanned with undazzled eyes, yet irradiates the whole world besides. The ages and nations bear witness to that mystery; it is the mystery of power and of healing,

[1] *Etudes Philosophiques.*

of life and of love. The knowledge that God exists ratifies conscience and enlightens it; consecrates reason yet humbles it; sets the will free by teaching it to substitute for the thraldom of petty motives a glad submission to a sacred law. It is the mother of progressive wisdom and of spiritual civilisation; it gives man the power to act righteously and to bear patiently; it changes an anarchy of warring passions into a royal commonwealth of graduated powers. For ages it has dried the eyes of the widow and guided the orphan's feet. Yet these are but its lesser gifts, for its higher boast is that it creates an inner world of sanctity and peace, a "hidden life" of the creature with the Creator, the pledge of a glorified life with Him. The spleen of an ungrateful and hasty time may fancy that it can sweep such gifts away; but a true philosophy will rebuke a revolt so self-destructive and so dishonourable. Whatever the theorist may affirm or deny, Christianity professes to be essentially a *life*, the life of individual man, and of social man; and, despite the scandals bequeathed by those who have but taken religion's name in vain, experience has attested her claim. We live in an experimental age: a contented sceptic would do well to become an experimentalist, and test religion by *living it*. Amid his inquiries he should include a careful one as to whether he has been a sincere and a reverent inquirer. We have been told, and not untruly, that "honest doubt" has in it much of faith. But doubt is not honest when it is proud, when it is reckless, when it is as confident

as if resolved negation were solid conviction, or as apathetic as if Divine Truth would be less of a gain than the "struggles that elicit strength." We have been told, in disparagement of creeds, that Life is Action; but it is in the light, not the darkness, that brave and sane men act and struggle. It is the Christian Faith that brings that light; and it was the Christian Life that first claimed to be a noble warfare. The warrior must have solid ground beneath his feet.

And yet the defender of religion must ever end with a confession. If all who believe had but been true to their trust, religion must in every age have shone abroad with a light that would long since and finally have conquered the world to itself. It is an eye keener than ours that sees how far each man has used his wealth of faith rightly, or come by his poverty honestly. If in many a case unbelief means a defective, perhaps an evil will, in how many is it not the malady of a bewildered time? How many a one who is tossed from doubt to doubt may yet, in the depths of his being, resemble St. Augustine when he was drawing nigh to the truth, and knew it not! God alone knew that in him the love of the good and of the true had never ceased, and that, however dry and barren might be the surface of his soul, there still remained, far down, the dews of past grace—and the tears of Monica. Almost to the last in what strange confusions did not that great soul remain, reserved as it was for a career so arduous and an expiation so noble from the moment that peace of heart had fitted him for the

militant life of the Christian, that the darkness which paralyses strength had been chased, and that a divine light had "given the battle to his hands." His conversion came quickly at last. Yet the process had been slow. He had learned that the enemies of religion disputed chiefly with the creations of their own fancy; that their difficulties were but those found no less abundantly throughout the course of nature than in the lore supernatural; that *their* warfare was one against the heart of man, with all its hopes and its aspirations—all that can give security to joy and a meaning to pain. Yet still he wavered. Few things earthly helped more to his conversion than the philosophy of Plato; yet just before that conversion he seemed on the point of committing his life in despair to that of Epicurus. So strongly does man's pride contend against man's greatness; so perseveringly does his ingenuity evade his good! But the happy hour came, and the ages have found cause to rejoice. In becoming a Christian, St. Augustine became also a true Theist—that is, one who not only believes in God, but loves Him and adores; for love, like humility and faith, is learned at the foot of the Cross.

III.

FAITH CONTRASTED WITH PRIVATE JUDGMENT.

"Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."—JOHN vi. 68.

"Casting away reasonings, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."—2 COR. x. 5.

"PRIVATE Judgment," the modern Rule of Faith, has for three centuries had possession of not a few countries abounding in arts, sciences, historic associations, genius, and industry. It has had many aids to which it had no original claim, including the institutions raised by Catholic piety for the maintenance of learning and the increase of knowledge, the traditional habits of races disposed to correct the aberrations of the head by the wisdom of the heart, and to retain as much of their inherited religion as was not absolutely incompatible with their new principles of investigation; and, above all, it has possessed the great standard of orthodoxy held up by the Orbis Terrarum, and in part by the Greek Church, which, though wholly unswayed by Papal influence, has ever attested in its separated state almost all Roman Catholic doctrines. Yet with these aids, as well as its own resources,

Maynooth Library

including State-patronage, the sanction of public opinion, a general sway over literature, unexpected sources of information and aids to criticism, it has failed to produce a scientific, a consistent, or a durable theology. To deny this failure would be as disingenuous as to affirm that Private Judgment is inconsistent with liberal institutions, or with commercial progress. Let disputants say what they please, common sense can judge of facts; and the world knows by this time both what Private Judgment can do, and what it cannot. Those who most respect it value it on the ground of its favouring freedom of thought, rather than of its embodying, in any consistent form, the results of profound thought on the subject most worthy of thought.

It has not only failed to build, but also to preserve. It bequeaths less than it inherited, and its patrimony daily wastes like the prodigal's. Many sacred principles were clung to by the early Reformers, in which their descendants no more believe than in the "traditions" rejected by them. Most of the first Reformers contended for orthodoxy on the Trinity and the Incarnation, and at least professed to hold, on those cardinal subjects, the faith of the first four Councils. To how many would not the decrees of those councils now seem needless subtleties, or contentious dogmatism? On the subject of the two chief Sacraments the belief of the many has become attenuated, and in countless cases all definite belief has vanished. The *opus operatum* of the Sacraments was denounced in

the sixteenth century; in the nineteenth how many believe that Prayer derives its efficacy only from the re action of the mind on itself, and therefore that to pray for external blessings is unworthy! As the Infallibility of the Church was in the sixteenth century denied, or reduced to an equivocation, so now the Divine inspiration and authority of Holy Scripture have met the same fate, to a large extent, and in that land chiefly which was the stronghold and birthplace of the first Reformers. The "dogmatic principle," for which the early Reformers were willing alike to persecute, or to undergo persecution, is itself trembling in the balance; and the pious too often endeavour to persuade themselves that, in discarding it, religion will flourish all the more as a Sentiment and a Worship when it has thrown off its burthen. Not only many of the objects of faith are believed in no more, but Faith itself stands shorn of its divine attributes, and degenerates into Opinion. The very essence of divine knowledge has thus admitted the taint; and supernatural things no longer need, as many maintain, to be believed with a supernatural certainty. In the language of the day, Faith means acquiescence without certainty, not spiritual certainty without scientific demonstration. Change follows change unperceived, because names remain unchanged, and because relative position is still retained; yet the clear-sighted see plainly enough that the question at stake is, not contending versions of Christianity, or even Christianity itself, but Religion, as distinguished from philosophy, and Theism itself

as a Religion. That there are revivals here and there proves no more than that the struggle is not yet over: —the tide goes out though each successive wave comes in.

There is here no question respecting such infidelity as exists both in Protestant or Roman Catholic countries, but has grown up and maintains itself by the avowed repudiation of Protestant or Roman Catholic first principles. In all communions Infidels may arise; for the human will is free to co-operate with grace, or to reject it. What the world observes, whether with approval or disapproval, is, that Private Judgment represents a body of doctrine diminishing as centuries go by through a necessity inherent in that rule of Faith itself. It stands thus painfully contrasted with inductive science, which daily adds to its noble stores. In it doctrine, as a consistent body of theology, seems incapable of growing, or even of living;—like inert matter it becomes assimilated by foreign things, such as prevalent philosophies, or political influences. This circumstance cannot be accounted for by any lack either of industry or ability in its professors. On the contrary, it has produced many men of genius, of learning, and of zeal. But these are the very men from whom it has sometimes received the severest shocks. They have founded sects for its destruction, not Orders for its advancement.

There is no question here with respect to many sublime functions commonly attributed to religion in all ages;—whether, for instance, it should rule nations,

inspire arts, mould manners, foster sciences, nurse civil institutions. For many centuries it did these things: but these are distinct considerations. At least it will be admitted that religion has one function which it cannot abdicate, that of *witnessing plainly for the Truth.* If a certain Rule of Faith fails to do this, the failure should be accounted for. The first question a philosophic inquirer would be disposed to ask himself is, whether the *method* which it adopted for the investigation of Truth in the province of Religion, was sound or unsound. An erroneous method would account at once for Theology being neither able to advance nor to hold its own. We know why the ancients made so little progress in physical science:—they pursued, for the most part, a false method. A method that belongs to one department of thought will not answer for another. Experiment will not suffice where syllogisms are required, nor deduction only where induction is needed. Intuitions will teach us nothing in political economy, though much in mathematics. The fine arts have a method of a more imaginative order. Theology, or the science of supernatural and revealed truths, must likewise possess a method of its own; and it is probable, *à priori*, that any other method would prove barren, even if it did not create confusion also.

The intellectual method originally improvised in vindication of a revolt already made, claimed to be a great discovery, and was known by the name of "Private Judgment." That was its Rule of Faith,

put forward in opposition to the Rule of Church Authority. As the Rule of Faith is, so must the faith formed by that rule be. If the former be sound, it will lead us into truth just in proportion as we observe it; if it be unsound, it will lead us into error, and eventually so imprison us in a world of false associations that truth itself, seen in a false perspective, must appear to us strange and uncomely. Disappointment was felt before long. The principle of Private Judgment in reality accorded to the individual no more than he possessed before, viz. the use of his own mental powers, and a right to pray for grace in the use of them; while the method by which it instructed him to use them, involved a loss no less vast than that of the aid which the individual was sure to derive, on the opposite Rule of Faith, from the collective faculties of the baptized race, brought together in the unity of the Church. St. Thomas Aquinas was confessedly a thinker as well as Luther or Calvin, but the *method* which he pursued gave him as data the authentic and authoritative conclusions of the whole Christian world up to his time, and imparted to him thus, beside his own mind, another mind as large as that of Christendom. The supplemental use of this larger mind no more involved the suppression of the individual mind, than the use of the telescope involves the loss of one's eyesight.

This brings us to a yet more momentous consideration. The belief in this collective Mind of Christendom, which supersedes, not individual intellectual

exertion, but private judgment—that is, merely *isolated* exertion, was no theory invented in later times for the guidance of theological inquirers, but was involved in the very idea of the Christian Church. If the Church exists at all, it *must* be filled with all truth, simply because it is the Body of Christ, who is Truth itself, and because it is the temple of the Spirit of Truth. If it be also a visible and organic body, it must, by its own nature, manifest abroad that truth of which it is the tabernacle and shrine. This would result from its own essential nature, even though the Church had never been expressly declared to be the "pillar and ground of the Truth," and even though to "hear the Church" had never been proclaimed to be a duty. Given the character and origin of the Church, its infallibility is a necessary deduction. We are too much in the habit of looking on the doctrine of infallibility as though it were a late discovery, or supposed discovery; whereas to believe in it was both the instinct and the necessity of the Church ever since the descent of the Spirit, and the cancelling of the curse of Babel. To doubt it must have involved her in the confusions that would assail a man who doubted his own existence. We are also too apt to look on infallibility with reference to its final end, or one of its final ends, instead of to its origin in the essence of the Church, and her substantial union with Him in whom there is "no darkness at all." We consequently forget that the doctrine of the Church's infallibility, far from being an exaggerated claim, is but a negative,

and therefore a wholly inadequate mode of expressing an attribute essentially positive which must equally have belonged to the Church, whether or not it had the function of constituting the right "Rule of Faith." Man is invested with certain attributes, in the natural order, which enable him to engage in commerce. The consequence is, that each individual finds himself, and at a comparatively small cost, possessed of the products of the remotest climates. In this lower sense he "inherits the earth," on the twofold condition of exercising his own faculties with honest industry, and also of remaining obedient to the laws of human society. But whether he rejects or accepts what might thus be his, the advantages offered to him result from certain essential laws of society and energies of human nature, which exist independently of him, and of their own special results, and which are involved in the idea of humanity developed into civilisation. An analogous process takes place in the supernatural order. As isolated individuals, or barbarous tribes, are organised into the unity of nations and of civil society, and as from that union each unit becomes an inheritor of what belongs to the whole, so also all nations, nay, humanity itself, as renewed and redintegrated in the mould of the second Adam, have become invested with a finer unity, and reappear in the form of the Church, universal at once, and one.

In that archetypal and perfect form of society are found the chief characteristics that belonged to the lower forms of society, *but with a proportionate elevation.*

In the supernatural as in the natural order, combination produces power. The combination of natural energies produces commercial wealth, and that of natural faculties produces *probable* knowledge as the ordinary guide of life. Combination in the supernatural order of society, which is founded not on the creation but the incarnation, is that which receives the august name of the "Communion of Saints." From that fountain flow the treasures of celestial riches, love, prayer, sacraments: and for that reason we gain thence that certain and divine knowledge which comes by faith, not sense, and which is our guide in the heavenly life. Through the Communion of Saints, all things belonging to the supernatural order are *in common* among Christians. Their knowledge must therefore, by necessity, be likewise a common knowledge, emanating from the Holy Spirit, who is the mind of the Church, and passing through the Church, of whom He is the living bond, to the individual. The Church is not an aggregate of individuals; nor a mere collective name for that aggregate, but a living body, the Mother of the Redeemed Race. The individual Christian is born of the Church. He is grafted into Christ by being sacramentally grafted into His body in baptism. From that body, which *has* sacraments because it *is* the great sacrament (the Sacrament of Emmanuel, "God with us"), he continues to draw his sacramental life; from its circle are radiated the charities which feed his heart with divine affections; its authority represents to him the

mediatorial sceptre of Christ, its Head, even as mortal parents, in the natural order, are an emblem of God as a Father: and, by parity of reasoning, its light is his light; its knowledge has illuminated him from his childhood up, and imparted to him the Christian faith long before he was able to judge or decide for himself. A mirror of divine truth had thus been created in the world; a mirror in which all lesser mirrors had been melted down, that they might put on a nobler unity, and in which all individual aberrations had been corrected. A mind had thus been created, such as the mind of unfallen man might have been; a mind world-wide, in which the prejudices and limitations of individual minds, as modified by race, climate, or local accident, had no place. It was the mind of the second Adam imparted to the race not only redeemed by Him, but restored, remoulded, and reconstituted in Him. Such a mind was capable of receiving in its fulness and purity the Christian revelation; therefore, the Gospel and the Church of Christ were sown by the same hand and at the same time, and grew up inseparably. A Body in which the Holy Spirit dwelt personally, was capable of understanding those Scriptures inspired by the Holy Spirit, and also of preserving those sacred recollections which the Holy Spirit was sent to call to its mind. Therefore, when the Spirit was given the Church arose in her strength; and in the might of the same Spirit the Church has ever since combated the world, the flesh, and the devil, competent equally to impart spiritual

graces, and to sever between light and darkness by the definition of disputed truth.

Of this doctrine—one so important that the *mystery* of one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church finds its place among the primary mysteries confessed in the creed—a particular inference relative to "Private Judgment" was but the smallest part. "Private Judgment" was practically superseded by a common judgment, more sacred and more certain in proportion as "the truth as it is in Jesus," excels the truth as determined by the caprice of individuals, who bear contradictory testimony respecting it. Private Judgment was also of course negatived wherever it was in opposition to the witness of that Church which, from the beginning, had "spoken with authority, not as the scribes," and had ratified her confession by the words "it hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and unto us." But it is equally true that the opposite principle, that of authority, did not exist solely or chiefly as a Rule of Faith, or for any controversial end. It could not possibly have been eliminated from the mighty dogma of which it was but a part, or rather a resultant. To establish "Private Judgment" as the Rule of Faith, must necessarily be to abolish the very idea of the Church as a divine Mystery, and living power, the organ of Christianity.[1] Conversely, to restore the idea of the Church, however faintly that idea has looked forth at first from ritual or ordinance, has ever eventually produced more or less a distrust in, or a

[1] See Moehler's *Symbolism*, and Dr. Klee's *Manuel des Dogmas*.

contempt for, the high-sounding but barren fallacy of "Private Judgment." Considering, then, that this new Rule of Faith could not displace the old one without destroying also a vast deal more besides, nay, uprooting a whole system of doctrines hitherto believed in by nearly all Christendom, and attested by countless passages of Holy Scripture, it must surely have seemed to us a duty, had we lived at the time of the revolt, to have tested severely the fundamental norma on which it rested.

Tempus non occurrit Ecclesiæ. As God can never change, so neither can His truth, or His covenanted mode of revealing it to us. Consequently, what would have been our duty three centuries ago is equally our duty now; and whatever would, three centuries ago, have been our certainty or our uncertainty concerning divine things until that duty had been faithfully performed, the same must be our certainty or our uncertainty now. That the worldly or the proud should not be disturbed by the present far-spread and avowed uncertainty, is not surprising; but few things attest more a delusion deep-rooted and pervading, than the circumstance that even the devout and sincere are so often lulled in a fatal security concerning the very foundations of their faith. Environed and imprisoned by an erroneous tradition, and blinded by cherished associations, multitudes, the cardinal principle of whose religion is inquiry, are contented practically to follow the authority of some sect which denounces authority, and make no real

inquiry as to that principle, the rule of faith, on which, notwithstanding, by their own admission, the whole of our knowledge respecting the will and ways of God, as revealed in Christ, must depend. Accustomed to the absence of certainty, they do not feel its loss. Neither the differences between them and their friends who accept the same rule as their guide, nor their own changes of opinion from day to day, awaken them to the fact that they have never really thought out the question of the Rule of Faith. Like her of old "whom the everlasting thunder lulls to sleep,"[1] they repose in a charmed rest; and the syren that subdues them is no spirit of harmony, but the storm of "public opinion," or the crash of systems crumbling ever back into their native chaos.

If a man of a philosophic mind were once to place himself outside his inherited system, and divest himself of prepossessions, what would be his mode of conducting religious inquiry? First, as a traveller begins with his map, he would *map out the subject of inquiry*, not taking now this road, and now that, as caprice or accident determined, but clearly ascertaining by what mode of access a subject otherwise beyond man could be approached. If he found that avenue to truth to be the "Rule of Faith," he would close his ears to all whispers likely to check his progress up the heavenly mountain—all whispers about matters irrelevant, or beyond his present powers of rightly estimating them. If he did not make the Rule of Faith

[1] See the *Antigoné* of Sophocles.

the sum total of his inquiry, he would at least make it the initiatory and principal part. To that question he would address himself as he would to any new *method* proposed to him for the prosecution of scientific, historic, or moral inquiry. He would begin by ascertaining how far the proposed method corresponded with the subject-matter of inquiry. If that method was inductive, he would inquire whether the subject-matter admitted of experiment. If it consisted in introspection or analysis of "what is deepest within us," he would inquire whether the subject-matter belonged, like mathematics, to the region of intuitions, or whether it included facts also. Above all, he would endeavour to ascertain how far the proposed method was consistent with itself. If it involved self-contradictions he would be sure it could not be sound or scriptural except in appearance.

Few things impressed me more when studying the question of the Rule of Faith than the absence of all serious teaching relative to the Method to be pursued in theological thought by Bacon. It must in his time have been with thinkers the question of questions; yet our greatest writer on Method, and a man gravely religious, seems to have shrunk from the subject. The ground beneath his feet felt unsteady, and the great chancellor

> "Dallied with his golden chain,
> And, smiling, put the question by."

The Inductive Method in Theology, except when used but occasionally, and in subordination to the

Deductive, must needs seem a hybrid and a monster, for the same reason that a theological method would be such in Natural Philosophy, *i.e.* from want of conformity between the Method and the subject-matter submitted to it. Yet the only alternative method must have been that Deductive one used, as all admit, by the Church during those early centuries when the great Doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation were protected from innovation. The primary Verities, immutably fixed in her mind, were to her what Axioms and Postulates are in Mathematics; and the Church, in making her Deductions from these, was guarded from error by the indwelling Spirit sent to her at Pentecost, and abiding with her for ever, not only to recall all things to her mind, but also to lead her on into all Truth.

For the investigation of this subject, viz. "Private Judgment," considered as a "Rule of Faith," the following tests would seem to be just and appropriate. The failure of that rule when tried by but one of them, would hardly be compatible with soundness in the rule.

1. If the Rule of Faith be the Bible only, as interpreted by the individual, then this rule must itself be clearly authenticated from Holy Scripture.

2. The rule must have been acted on in those primitive times when, as the Reformers affirmed, Christianity was purest.

3. The "Reformed" theology must itself be practically based on the observance of its own rule, not on the violation of it.

4. We should know from Holy Scripture, not from Church authority alone, what books constitute the canon of inspired Scripture.

5. We should possess, independently of Church authority, a guarantee for the substantial authenticity of the original manuscripts, and a safe mode of ascertaining the true text.

6. The substantial fidelity of our translations should be also guaranteed to us with a reasonable certainty, yet independently of Church authority.

7. Our rule must provide a means of interpreting Scripture truly.

8. It should enable us to reach the larger and deeper meaning of Scripture, as well as the narrower and more superficial.

9. The rule must itself be a distinct and unequivocal one.

10. It must be one consistent with the propagation as well as the maintenance of Christianity.

11. It must secure us from the admixture of grave error with truth; and thus impart the faith in its purity as well as in its fulness.

12. It must guard us from all fatal errors in ritual as well as in doctrine.

13. Our Rule of Faith must consist with faith itself, and with the development of those virtues which have their root in faith; with a real belief in a supernatural world, in the objective truth of Revelation, and in the hallowing influence of divine Knowledge.

Let us examine but a few of these tests. Respecting

many of them countless learned tomes of controversy—critical, scriptural, and historical—have been written. We are here only concerned with those tests, but little controversial, which relate to the Philosophy or Idea of a "Rule of Faith" in harmony with the needs of Christian teaching, and the essential character of the Religion taught. In dealing with this great question we must separate what, however important, is yet irrelevant from the relevant. The real question at issue is not the dignity of the Bible, which the "Private Judgment" affects to exalt, but which it disparages, just as we should inferentially deny the depth of a river if we asserted that it was possible for a child to wade across it. The question is not its sacredness, which surely cannot be denied by that Church which has ever retained the whole canon, and asserted its plenary inspiration, but is solely one respecting its special office in the Church. What God has given for one purpose cannot be made by the will of man to discharge a different one. If it be abused, the right use of it will be missed, and the blessing forfeited. The point in question is, What are the conditions which God has appointed for its profitable use? Many, indeed, will often naturally think that Catholics do not read the Bible frequently enough, since they may forget that it is for edification, not in order to originate his creed, that a Catholic reads it, and often do not know how large a portion of the Breviary, Missal, and most Catholic books of devotion, consists of Holy Scripture so arranged that the mere relative

position of passage with passage diffuses over the sacred text a light such as proceeds from the countenance of her alone who ever looks on God. No doubt numerous Catholics would gain much if they read the Bible more. To such it might impart a manlier faith and an insight more keen, as their pastors often tell them; but the Rule of Faith, like the Faith itself, must remain always the same.

There are, it is true, a few texts upon which Private Judgment finds something like a support. Their real meaning is well brought out in the following passage:[1]—

"First, he quotes the words of our Lord (St. John v. 39), 'Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.' But where do these words contain a command from God, bidding all men to read the Bible, and assuring them that the Bible is a sufficient guide into all truth? Our Lord bade the Jews examine the Scriptures of the Old Testament, for that they testify of Him as the promised Messias; and as soon as they had recognised Him as such, they should at once listen to His words, receive His doctrine, and obey His commandments. . . . He made the same use of the Scriptures as Catholics do in speaking to Protestants at this day. The Catholic says to Protestants, 'Search the scriptures,' for these are they which testify of the Church as well as of her head; they expressly command you to 'hear the Church,' and declare that

[1] *Clifton Tracts.*

she is 'the pillar and ground of the truth.' You ought therefore to listen to her voice, receive her doctrines, and obey her commandments. Our Lord bade the Jews examine the Scriptures for a *particular* object:—is this the same thing as commanding Christians to examine the Scriptures for every object? He sent them to the Scriptures as testifying of Him the Teacher, to whom, when recognised, they were to submit. Because the Scriptures testify plainly to the appointed teacher, the Church, does it therefore follow that it sets forth all other truths so clearly, as that you should need no other teacher but it? Nay, does not the very contrary conclusion follow?"

. . . . . .

"But we are sometimes reminded that the Bereans were expressly commended by one of the writers of the New Testament, because we read of them, in the Acts of the Apostles (xvii. 11), that 'they were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.' Surely, however, no one can pretend to argue from these words that the Bereans made the same use of the Holy Scriptures as Protestants insist upon nowadays. The very contrary can be clearly shown by an examination of the history. For what was the real state of the case? St. Paul had 'reasoned with them out of the scriptures; opening and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom he preached

to them, was Christ' (ver. 2). If then they would listen to the preacher at all, they would do no other than search the Scriptures; for it was precisely this to which he had directed their attention. . . . 'Many of them believed.' But what did they believe? Did they really believe only what St. Paul was able to prove to them out of the Old Testament? for you must remember that this was the only part of the Bible then in existence. . . . If so, they could not even believe that Jesus was the Christ, since this could not possibly be proved out of the Old Testament, every word of which had been written long before Jesus was born. . . . Even so a Catholic Priest, at the present day, might open and allege the Scriptures of the New Testament in argument with a man who acknowledges their authority, and he might show that our Lord established a society which was to endure throughout all ages, even until the end of time, and that He gave this society power and authority to teach all nations all things whatsoever He had commanded."

The scriptural claim of authoritative teaching challenges at once the reader of Holy Scripture if not prepossessed by a modern tradition. "The kingdom of God," the constant subject of our Lord's parables, means simply His Church; and a kingdom, by necessity, exercises authority. "All power is given unto me in heaven and earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe whatever I have

commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20). "He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me." "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." . . . These are texts which a long series of ages and nations, of Fathers and of Councils, believed to apply not less to the Apostolic Church than to the Apostles, and yet which assert or imply a principle the opposite of Private Judgment. "If he neglect to hear the Church, let him be to thee as an heathen man and a publican." "That good thing which was committed to thee, keep by the Holy Ghost, which dwelleth in us." "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach them to others also." "If any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the Churches of Christ." "*We* are of God: he that knoweth God heareth *us*: he that is not of God heareth not *us*. *Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.*" "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which you have learned, whether by word, or by our epistle." These are a few among the passages to which the Fathers had constantly appealed against the self-will of heretics in early times, and when innovations were proposed far less important than the inauguration of a new Rule of Faith, or the expurgation of doctrines admitted by all to have been included in the Church's teaching

during far the greater part of her existence. How were such passages met? They were too often ignored, or taken separately, not in their cumulative force, and reduced to nothing by the same spare and minimising system of interpretation by which Unitarians evade the force of the texts relating to the Holy Trinity.

The primary law of the Church, as an organic body, is its Unity. It could otherwise bear no witness to Truth. It is one because its Head is one, because the Spirit which guides and rules it is one, and because its Faith is one. Being a visible body, its Unity must be as visible as its Apostolicity; and for this provision was made by the supremacy of St. Peter's See. To this supremacy many most momentous texts refer. When Peter was first called his special function was marked by a change in his name analogous to that made in the case of Abraham. "Thou *shalt be* called Cephas." When the time was fulfilled our Lord addressed him again, and said, after Simon had confessed the Messiahship of Christ, "I say unto thee that *thou art* Peter, and upon this Rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it; and I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven." So far from the privilege of Peter being identical with that of the other Apostles, because in some instances the Apostolic College, in union with him, received some functions which to him only were committed singly, the difference between him and the rest is distinctly expressed. Our Lord tells him that Satan had desired to have them (in the

plural) that he might sift them as wheat: "but I have prayed for *thee*, that thy faith fail not; and thou, when thou art converted, *strengthen thy brethren*." Again he is asked three times, "Lovest thou me *more than these?*" before to him is committed the rule of the whole flock, "Feed my sheep, Feed my lambs;" a distinction being here as plainly marked between him and the other Apostles, with reference to his love, as in the previous charge with reference to his faith. Entering on his sacred charge, Peter opens the commission of the Gospel to the Jews. When the Gentiles are to be admitted he, not St. Paul, initiates their reception. Peter takes measures for filling up the Apostolic College, by asserting the necessity of choosing an Apostle in the place of Judas. Peter works the first miracle. In the first council, after no small dissension and disputation, Peter speaks, and judgment is given accordingly. Throughout the New Testament, wherever there is a list of the Apostles, the name of Peter stands at the head of that list. How is it that these texts, with many readers of the Bible, mean nothing? Are they not far more striking when taken cumulatively, than the texts adduced to prove either that Episcopacy, or the institute of Presbyters, is of perpetual obligation in the Church? The Visible Unity and the Authority of the Church are not accidents. They enter into the Idea of the Church. To ignore them was but the sad necessity of times when the "One Faith" too was broken up, and Nations or Kings affected to make creeds.

As regards the second test, so far from the Religion of those who belong to Bodies that affirm Private Judgment having been really based on that principle, it has practically been based on that of Authority so far as it has been a life and not a battle-cry, though of a most imperfect authority. In all the sects the successive generations have followed more the tradition of their forefathers, and the authority of their ministers, than any real conclusions of their own minds on divine matters beyond the reach of men without learning. "Private Judgment" remains indeed answerable for many of the heart-burnings, sometimes denounced under the name of "The Plague of Controversy"; but in the sects themselves the more beneficent influences of Religion worked up unperceived from the ground of Authority. The more respectable sects retained the primary Creeds which expressed the Authoritative Judgment of the Church. Children received their Faith on the Authority of their parents, and of those Authoritative Creeds, especially the Apostles' Creed. To say that they received it only *provisionally* would be to cast an exaggerated stigma on the sects. It is true that when those children became mature, they may have deemed themselves entitled to investigate for themselves those later and less momentous doctrines respecting which the sects differed, and so far to "cast aside all prepossessions." But thus to act with respect to the primary doctrines of the "Apostles' Creed" would have been to become Unbelievers on the chance of recovering a faith provisionally abjured.

No parent himself a sincere Christian but must have denounced such a course as Apostasy. Yet without this the youth's maturer studies and meditations respecting his childhood's creed could not have been the real *formation* of his Faith. It was a wholly different thing, viz. the illustration and the confirmation of a Faith already formed. Every day believers investigate what yet they do not regard themselves as licensed to doubt: they do so to deepen a faith irrevocably theirs, to confute its assailants, and to protect the imperilled: but they know also that to admit a willing doubt as to the Christian Faith, which belongs to man only through Divine Grace, is to "quench the Spirit," and to murder Faith on pretence of ascertaining whether it was ever worthy to live. "Private Judgment" has thus only escaped detection because it has not been fairly tried by two successive generations. It has been but the limestone broth - nourishing when seasoned with the meat of Authority. All who believed that children were to be brought up as Christians, and not as nominal Christians but as the best Christians, might well have suspected that, however needful and honourable a manly Private Judgment may be in man's outward life, as when an individual refuses to sin with the multitude, it could not have been made the "Rule of Faith" in things divine. He might also have inferred that if "Authority must needs mingle with faith," a Divine Authority must have accompanied an Authentic Revelation; and that to that Authority man's successive generations

owed a direct and entire, not an indirect and incomplete, obedience.

So far from Private Judgment having been the Christian's guide in primitive times, there was then no adequate object on which it could have been exercised. The last book of the Bible was not written till the end of the first century. The canon of Scripture was not determined, and the authentic books discriminated from the spurious, till after a second century had passed away. It was therefore impossible that the Bible, as interpreted by the individual's private judgment, should, in those early times, have been the Rule of Faith. To suppose that the early Christians were what is now called "Bible Christians," is as preposterous as to assert that the Greeks and Romans used artillery in their warfare. The guide of the primitive Christian was the Church, which obeyed the apostolic injunction to Timothy, and kept safe the deposit of Faith. Particular Epistles, and whatever other portions of Holy Scripture existed in particular Churches, were frequently read aloud and expounded to the faithful. It is thus that the modern Catholic also is taught, except that the Missal and his various books of devotion commonly contain a far larger portion of Scripture than was accessible to the early Christian.

After the disputes concerning the doubtful books had been settled, and the canon fully determined, it was as impossible as before to act on the novel Rule of Faith. God's providence had not yet given to man the art of printing; and there are more Bibles in one

Catholic city at the present day than existed in a large province of the old Roman empire. So it continued till the art of printing was discovered. It was thus in the time of the martyrs. It was thus in the time when the great general councils were defining the Christian faith. It was thus when the nations of Europe were successively evangelised. It was thus, not by man's neglect, but by the providence of God. Holy Scripture, far from being neglected, was faithfully preserved, assiduously copied, employed for the purposes of instruction, profoundly studied, meditated, commented on by the most learned fathers and schoolmen. Yet, in these heroic ages of faith and love, no one dreamed that Private Judgment was the interpreter of the Bible.

The Greek schism never admitted the rule of Private Judgment. It arose at that hasty revolt self-styled a reformation. Under the pretence of exalting the Bible, the judgment of the individual was exalted as the interpreter of the Bible. Two principles which have nothing in common were thus connected by a verbal equivocation. But even then it was impossible to carry out a maxim which nature as well as providence disowns. It was necessary for every man to have a Faith; while not one in a thousand was capable of forming a theological creed for himself. A few men, accordingly, wrote commentaries on Holy Scripture, and drew up so-called confessions of faith; and, later, men became vehement in defence of the new traditions thus originated. Universal education is obviously among the pre-requisites for Private

Judgment. It is not till within the last century that any serious thought has been bestowed on the education of the masses; and even yet but little sound progress has been made in that enterprise. Should it ever be accomplished, the problem will remain as far as ever from solution. The young, the larger portion of the human race, will present an obstacle as insurmountable as the poor do now to Private Judgment.

Above all, we should require, if Private Judgment were our guide, a Scriptural guarantee that those who use it will be rightly directed by it in their interpretation of Scripture. It is a poor sophism to point to those texts which affirm that all Scripture was given for man's instruction. All this is insisted on equally by the Catholic Church; but the question is, by what key the casket is to be unlocked. It is vain to say that, though the mind of man is naturally weak and blind, it is yet enlightened by the Holy Spirit; for all this likewise is but a fragment of admitted Catholic doctrine. The point at issue is, whether the Holy Ghost, "who spake by the prophets," and through Whom alone they are intelligible, be given to the Church, and to the individual in union with and in subordination to the Church; or be given to individuals separately, and irrespectively of their devout submission to the Visible Body of Christ. According to Catholic teaching the Holy Spirit is the mind of the Church; and though individuals can neither think one good thought, nor do one good action, nor spiritually discern the truth, except through His aid, yet

that aid is accorded only through their union with Christ their Head, from Whom and from the Father the Holy Spirit ever proceeds; nor can individuals maintain union with that Head, except through union with His mystical Body. Whatever be the covenant which God has made with man, it is according to that covenant alone that man can claim the Divine gift. Surely it is not difficult to distinguish between the value of a gift and the right use of it. If the Church's teaching constitute a part of the system God has instituted for our instruction, to discard her authority, on the ground that the Bible is sufficient by itself, must be as wanton an act of will-worship as though we were to discard the Epistles, on the ground that all necessary lights may be found in the Gospels.

No one can be united to truth in its more spiritual forms who despises it in the humbler form of Fact. Experience has tested Private Judgment. A Rule of Faith which, in place of certifying faith as to what it is to believe, sanctions equally opposite forms of belief, is as clearly a failure as a key that will not open a lock, or a knife that will not cut. A rule which bends in the hand of him who applies it is no rule.

The allegation that Private Judgment only fails from lack of devotion in those that use it, is contradictory to fact. The Puritans and Anabaptists were probably as fervent in prayer as innovators of a staider character, and beyond most others insisted on the doctrine of grace. Luther, who asserted the Real Presence, in a form of his own devising, and

Zuinglius, who denied it in all forms alike, are both held by their followers to have been "men of prayer."[1] Who will take on him to say that Dr. Channing, though a Unitarian, did not seek divine aid in the exercise of his private judgment, as well as Dr. Chalmers, and Dr. Chalmers as well as Dr. Pusey, though the last justly deems the Apostolical Succession one of the notes of Christ's Church, and the former two were no believers in the "Sacramental system"? Do not the Quakers believe in the teaching of the Spirit? and have they not the Bible also? Yet they believe that it is the Living, or Inward Word, not the Written Word, that is to guide us. A Sectarian may say of his brother that he differs from him because he has not the Spirit, and is not a child of God; but he cannot prevent a rejoinder being made in the same words, and with precisely the same show of reason. It is worth observing here that a violation of charity is forced upon the Sectarian by his Rule of Faith, to which a Catholic is never tempted. A Catholic is never either called upon or permitted to judge an individual, because he cannot tell whether any particular person be or be not excused by an "invincible ignorance" of the truth—that is, by an ignorance the result of circumstance, and not proceeding from the will. The Sectarian, on the other

1 The fact that men who have recourse to God in prayer, arrive at opposite conclusions, in no way contradicts the promise of Christ, that if we ask we shall receive (Matt. vii. 7, comp. James i. 5); because prayer has its conditions, *e.g.* humility, obedience, faith, etc.—*Clifton Tract.*

hand, is obliged either to give up the sufficiency of his Rule of Faith, or to account for its failure by the assumption that none of those whose belief differs from his own on fundamental points, possess those dispositions without which no one can see God. True charity is exercised towards the individual solely, not towards the doctrine. Sectarianism is forced to be latitudinarian as to doctrine, up to a certain point, and, beyond that point, to be uncharitable to the individual. Not less vain is the plea that men who exercise Private Judgment devoutly differ only in matters not "fundamental." Such is not the fact.

Let the Apostles' Creed, or any other imaginable summary of leading truths, be put forward as comprising all "fundamental doctrines," and the same inherent fallacy will be found in that plea. There is no philosophy under it. When we assert that the Creed is true, do we refer to its letter or its meaning? If to the meaning, then we assert that no one can in reality hold the Creed who wilfully denies what is legitimately deduced from it, and obstinately maintains a contrary doctrine.

Multitudes, it is sometimes answered, have gone to heaven without having ever heard of deductions from articles of the Apostles' Creed. Doubtless; but multitudes are also saved without an *explicit* knowledge of several articles included in that Creed. It is hard to say what is the least amount of *explicit* knowledge which may, in special cases, be necessary for salvation. The reason of this is, that

the whole Faith exists latently in but a small part of it, if rightly received. The whole Law was propounded to man in one Commandment. Perfect love to God is the keeping of the whole Law. But, on the other hand, to offend wilfully as to any part of it, is to offend in all. The whole Faith was virtually included in St. Peter's confession; but that confession would not have been the true faith relatively to St. Peter, had he refused to accept any doctrine really contained in it.

By essential doctrines of Christianity is meant, not that which may possibly be sufficient for an individual, a quantity which must vary according to circumstance, but that which suffices for the general Body of true Christians. In this sense essential truth cannot stop short of the *entire revelation of God*, as already defined, or as the necessities of future times may require its definition. If, for instance, heretics professed to accept the article, "Who spoke by the Prophets," but yet restricted Inspiration to the Prophetical Books of Holy Scripture, and if ampler definitions were resorted to by the Church to vindicate the authority of the whole Bible, could it be conceded that any one rightly understood that article of the Creed who refused to admit it in the ampler sense of the Church? Faith belongs to the will as well as to the mind; and if the will believes rightly, the mind must believe with more or less of detail, in proportion as it is instructed. Ignorance relates to the mind only: denial to the will. The Unity of the

"one Faith" is forgotten where the Unity of the Church that witnesses to it is ignored.

To say that a part of what we hold is essential doctrine, and a part is not, amounts to this, that a part of it is faith, and a part is opinion; that a part is divine, and a part human; that a part is revealed religion, and a part philosophical conjecture. Now, the latter part, in this case, not only cannot be an essential part of the Christian faith, but cannot be any part of it. The object of Faith is Revelation. It must surely be necessary to believe in the whole of what God has revealed and authoritatively propounded to us; and it can be no duty to believe in aught beside. A faith, part of which is divine, and part human, carries with it a "body of death," which must infect the nobler part. Simplicity of faith cannot be attained by believing no more than the Church had defined before denial rendered definitions necessary. As well might one hope to make a man childlike by cutting him down to the dimensions of a child.

The theory of fundamentals regards the Christian faith not in its Idea, but mechanically, as though it were a bundle of separable notions, instead of being a Truth at once one and manifold, potentially contained in a single statement, yet capable of being indefinitely expanded. It reduces the Church to the littleness of the individual, instead of imparting to the individual the stature and the faith of the whole mystic Body. It affects to give us false immunities,

while, in fact, it deprives us of divine privileges. The same faith may exist implicitly or explicitly when we recognise a Teacher sent from God; but a mere abstract faith in that which, for the very reason that it is a book, and therefore impersonal, can never test our sincerity by requiring us to accept in detail what we profess to accept generally, is hardly scriptural faith. The Bible is not the print and paper, but the meaning of the Sacred Book. If instead of discerning that meaning, we contemplate in the text but our own reflection, finding in Holy Scripture simply what our several acquirements or associations have enabled us to bring to it, have we not reason to fear that we have thus changed the Word of God into the word of man, and destroyed, by mis-using, the divine gift? The Spirit is one, and the Word is one, and the Faith is one; but the religions which men profess to extract from that Word, by the aid of that Spirit, are so many, that the disputants cannot answer the question, "What is Christianity?" Well may the humble and loving Christian exclaim, "They have taken my Lord away, and I know not where they have laid Him."

Private Judgment is bound to discard every deduction from a text which does not follow from it by a sequence apparently almost self-evident. The mind of the Church, on the other hand, can interpret on a wholly different principle, being free from the disturbing influences that affect isolated individuals. It deals with Holy Scripture accordingly as the Apostles do,

sometimes deducing from texts meanings not drawn from them by an absolutely obvious and necessary inference; in other words, seeing a meaning where an uninspired eye could see none. This is the reason why the Church is sometimes accused of false reasoning, the fact being, that she often refers to a text rather as a motto than as the basis of a logical argument. From texts even the most vague she can draw certain conclusions, because she brings to the study of Holy Scripture that complete faith and spiritual mind which alone have the gift of discernment. The mere individual, on the other hand, is morally forced to discard all texts that are not plain. That which is to him practically the Bible becomes shrivelled up into a small space; and the Bible of his neighbour is in words alone the same as his.

The rule of Private Judgment can thus deal only with the surface of the Bible. Holy Scripture is a book of unfathomable depth, as well as of boundless riches. It is possible that not its shortest chapter has yet been wholly explored. A single text is often so many-sided that it reveals meaning beneath meaning, as it is more and more deeply searched. For this reason the mystical interpretation of Holy Scripture has ever been insisted on by Catholic theologians, as well as the literal. But if isolated individuals are to interpret it, they cannot trust themselves to a method of interpretation which, in that case, would be the work of fancy alone. Who, for instance, could have felt certain, on his private judgment only, that the passage

of the Red Sea was a type of baptism, that the history of Isaac and Ishmael stood in a symbolic relation to the Law and the Gospel, and that certain passages from the Psalms referred especially to our Lord? It is the Apostolic Church only that can interpret Scripture according to the profounder method of the Apostles and yet with the same certainty. The contradictions of commentators on the book of Revelation sufficiently prove that the mystical interpretation, when carried out by individual caprice or imagination, is as unsafe a guide as omen and augury: yet through the literal meaning alone the early Christian converts could hardly have discovered the new dispensation in the books of the Old Testament.

A comprehensive and manifold appreciation of Holy Scripture, like a deep one, is incompatible with the Rule of Private Judgment. No text of Scripture can be explained by itself alone, or with the aid of the context alone. It must be compared with other texts in other parts of the Bible. It might have pleased God to have presented us with all truths of moment, and all important moral principles in a compendious form, as in a creed, or a catechism, but it has pleased Him to do the contrary. The great truths of religion are found scattered over the whole Bible. Nay, those truths, owing to their very greatness, are divided and subdivided, a portion being expressed in one text, while another portion of the same truth is to be found elsewhere. Thus, in one

place, we read what might make us think that faith only is necessary, in another we learn that baptism is also a part of the Christian covenant. One set of texts instructs us that Christ is God, another that He is man also. Figurative expressions are sometimes used, and in other places words which, if acted on exclusively, would lead us into superstition or error. The confusion which must result from not distinguishing between the literal and the figurative, or from not combining texts which are mutually supplemental, is not guarded against by any provision made in Holy Scripture itself, simply because God has given us another guide also. If we reject that guide we endeavour to sail without a chart. What right has a sect to affirm that the words "This is my body" are to be taken figuratively, just as "I am the door" is a figurative expression, if it condemns the Socinians for in like manner explaining away the plain words of Scripture, rather than believe that Christ is God? Who can affirm that the words, "Drink ye all of it," addressed to the Apostles alone, make it invariably the right of the laity to receive the cup if the charge, "Do this in remembrance of me," does not equally give them the power of consecrating? Who can affirm that the prophecy about Antichrist refers to Christian not pagan Rome, and that the prophecies in Isaiah, describing the Church in its visibility, its universality, and its unity, do *not* refer to the Roman Catholic Church? How can Private Judgment know that a parallel exists between the

destruction of the brazen serpent and that of the images of the saints, yet be sure also that no analogy exists between the dispersed tribes who refused to worship at Jerusalem, and who, in losing unity lost the faith also, and the sects which have set up rival altars? Who can be sure that Judah, selected from his brethren, and endowed with a promise fulfilled centuries later, and that by means which many might have thought human and accidental, was not a type of Peter selected from his brethren, and commanded to strengthen them? What is to be our guide in these matters? "The general tenor of Scripture," it will be answered. Just so. But on this principle a previous knowledge of the whole must determine the interpretation of the parts. Now such a knowledge is actually possessed by the Church, for she bears witness ever to what she had seen and known before one book of the New Testament was written. Individuals, on the other hand, who refuse to communicate in the divine knowledge of the Church, can become acquainted with Holy Scripture only by proceeding to a knowledge of the whole from a knowledge of the parts—that is, from a knowledge of what, on their own confession, must remain unknown. Men frequently speak as if the "general tenor" of the Scriptures were a thing easily understood, whereas a real appreciation of it, and of the general "analogy of the faith," is among the last attainments of the most instructed Christian. What a sectarian mistakes for this broad knowledge is his own particular

theological theory or prepossession, which is to him a key for the elucidation of all doubtful passages. The rule of Private Judgment, then, is essentially a narrow, a superficial, and a random method of interpretation. If we use it we may lose not a portion merely, but far the larger portion of the meaning of Holy Writ. The draught which we secure must depend on the net which we use; and if we prefer our own to that of the Galilean fishermen we must take the consequences.

Philosophy, once more, requires what polemical necessities shrink from owning, viz. that a Rule of Faith must be an unequivocal one. That of Private Judgment has ever been equivocal. In theory each man is by it invited to form his Faith for himself; but, in fact, when his private judgment happens not to coincide with that of the community to which he belongs, he has been too frequently persecuted by the State, and almost always is denounced by his minister as schismatical, or, at least, disloyal and unfilial. This is obviously unjust, for, on the principle of Private Judgment, a dissenter must have at least as good a right to abandon the national Church as the early Reformers had to abandon the universal one. The most contradictory theories prevail also as to the nature of Private Judgment. The principle is commonly asserted in its most unmixed form; but attempts are made to combine it with that of authority. The theories respecting this mixed authority are contradictory no less. Sometimes the authority means that

of some particular national or established community over its own members. Such authority must, of course, be limited where the claimant to it does not also claim infallibility; but whether the line of limitation is to be drawn by the sect or by the individual, no one can say. At other times the theory of authority means that the inquirer is to stand perfectly free as regards the decisions of any existing community, but that he is to take into account the judgment of ancient Fathers and Councils in determining his own. What Fathers and Councils, however, he is to consult, especially when unlearned, on what principle he is to interpret them, and how far he is to be guided by their opinions except where they coincide with his own, the advocates of this theory have never determined. All such contending theories are, indeed, in one respect fatally identical, since Private Judgment, if admitted at all, must ever sit in the *ultimate* court of appeal. Private Judgment thus is not one rule but several, just as it results not in one religion but in several, with a common attribute of uncertainty—that is, among men who think.

A true Rule of Faith must be consistent, not only with the maintenance of the Faith, but with its propagation, as a very small amount of philosophy suffices to prove. Now the consequence of Private Judgment is to produce rival creeds, and it is utterly impossible that the heathen should be converted permanently, or on a large scale, by a religion propounded to them in contradictory versions. The sects differ, as we have

seen, about matters regarded as essential by the contending parties. Such is the case even in the opposed schools included within the same establishment. To deny the "sacramental system" is heretical in the opinion of High Churchmen, and to assert it is "soul destroying" in that of Low Churchmen. It is impossible, then, that a compromise should be made on such points, and equally impossible that the pagan world should be brought to agree permanently with those who cannot agree among themselves. Again, where no organic principle of unity is recognised as the source of mission and jurisdiction, it is impossible to prevent the missionaries of rival sects from ultimately coming into fatal collision. Our Lord's prayer for unity among all who followed Him, a unity which He compares to nothing less than that subsisting between Himself and His Father, was based upon the desire "that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me"; and the connection between the success of missionary enterprise and unity in the Faith and in the Church is obvious. Who can seriously imagine that even if the heathen nations could be evangelised, they could be retained in the Faith by a religion consisting only of a doctrine or a sentiment, without a priesthood, an ecclesiastical rule, or a worship uniform and divine? If the Hindoos were converted, could the Christian faith be maintained among them by the principle of Private Judgment, and a church which to them must appear little more than a great Bible society? Would this suffice, also,

for the Buddhist, the Mahometan, or the African races? It was not thus that Europe was evangelised; nor is it by the principle of Private Judgment that the missionary of any sect maintains whatever success attends his efforts. He cannot, however, discard his principles at will, or prevent them from producing their natural results; and accordingly we know, on the authority of devoted missionaries, that the disputes among Christians are among the chief obstacles to the propagation of the Gospel. A momentary truce (were it, indeed, possible to attain peace by the sacrifice of truth) could, at most, produce but a momentary good. If the rival missionaries are to co-operate on a common principle, that principle, it is certain, must be the one upon which alone permanent unity of Faith, and Faith unmixed with error, is conceivable. The contrast between the magnificent contributions of England to missionary work, and the smallness of the results, is a deeply pathetic thing.

Above all, a Rule of Faith, if true, must be consistent with the full exercise of Faith, and with the harmonious development of the other Christian virtues. In this respect the rule of Private Judgment is so defective that if all acted upon it who imagine that to it they owe, under God, their religious knowledge, the very idea of religious faith must long since have perished. Private Judgment, by engendering contradictory opinions in matters of faith, practically denies the *certainty* of faith. It is, therefore, forced to ascribe to the principle of faith itself deficiencies

inherent only in the individual not yet strong in faith, or placed in circumstances under which the complete exercise of faith is to him impossible. No sensible man will believe that certainty can belong to doctrines which are the perpetual subject of dispute among the best and ablest men he knows, and all of whom invoke the aid of the same Spirit, while they apply the same Rule to the same subject-matter. Common sense can recognise simple facts in spite of evasion: and an appeal as sharp and short as, "What then meaneth this bleating of sheep in mine ears?" will need as a reply something more than a stereotyped phrase about "agreement in essentials." Confronted by contradictions, yet shrinking from the abyss of conscious infidelity, theological belief declines from certainty to probability; and too often those alone feel positive respecting their religion whose temper makes them equally positive concerning other matters not the subject of revelation at all, as, for instance, their own individual salvation, or the truth of their political convictions. When certainty has ceased, the rock on which the fabric of the Christian life should be reared crumbles into sand. Another and less sincere class of thinkers affirm that they are certain with respect to their conclusions, but that others may be equally certain of opposite opinions; and that no one has a right to brand his neighbour's opinion as erroneous. This is to substitute intellectual taste for conviction, and practically to deny, not only the certainty of faith, but the objective existence of Truth itself. Truth

upon this theory would be relative, not absolute, like sensations; and Theism and Atheism would stand upon the same level. A third class throw themselves on the inner light of Reason, as the Puritan throws himself on the Spirit, affirming that Reason is a universal endowment incapable of deceiving. But the philosopher of this school cannot deny that revealed religion includes matters of fact, as well as ideas of the pure reason, and that reason, far from being able to determine respecting facts long past, cannot always prove that the ideas included in its own province possess an actual as well as an ideal existence. Neither can he shut his eyes to the fact that other persons, possessed of the same universal gift, have arrived at conclusions exactly the opposite of his own; and that his own convictions have also varied, as to the gravest subjects, at different periods of his mature life. Once more, even though reason were indeed infallible, the isolated individual must be capable of misusing it; as when a man makes some fatal mistake in casting up a sum in arithmetic. He has, therefore, no means of determining whether it is he or his neighbour who is under a delusion. This species of uncertainty would be our condition in mathematical science itself, if its professors arrived at opposite conclusions. In all these schools alike, then, Private Judgment tends to lead even pious men, though reluctantly, in the direction of scepticism, disguised under the alias of "Breadth" or of "Charity."

To return to our primary theme—the Church's

authority as the Rule of Christian Faith. That high Idea is misapprehended because the authentic idea of Faith itself has been insensibly subverted. It has "suffered a sea-change," but not one for the better. Divine faith is a theological virtue, and a supernatural gift which enables man to believe and confess with a knowledge, obscure in kind, but absolutely certain, the truth which God has revealed, and on the ground that God has revealed it. The intuitions of reason never could constitute divine faith, because, however certain they may be, as in mathematics, the faculty is not a supernatural gift infused by the Holy Ghost; and the knowledge it imparts is not accepted on the ground of its being revealed by God. For the same reason the knowledge derived from the senses belongs not to Faith, whether such knowledge be certain or uncertain. *Human* Faith, likewise, another mode of knowledge, being founded on merely human testimony, belongs not to the order of divine Grace, and thus differs essentially from the gift of divine Faith, although it exercises its own subordinate part in sacred things, as well as a principal part in the affairs of ordinary life; holding in the natural order a place in many respects analogous to that which divine Faith occupies in the supernatural. From all these modes of knowledge divine Faith differs; and likewise from that of Vision, which belongs to the kingdom of glory. Faith comes to us by grace, and with the co-operation both of the human mind and will, to both of which it belongs.

But how is Christian faith exercised? This is a question of measureless importance. It has ever been exercised after one and the same fashion. For the exercise of Faith we require *two* things;—the internal grace itself, and an external guide, either God Himself, or a prophet commissioned by God, and challenging us in His name—a prophet by whom that gift of faith may be directed to its proper objects, since the devout disposition alone could not suffice. It was thus that our Lord stood up among His disciples, and that the Apostles, when the Spirit had descended upon them, at once appealed to, and directed, the faith of the early Christians. They still continue to address us through that Apostolic Church, Catholic, and yet One, in which the unity of the Apostolic College, united ever with Peter, lives and rules. Without the internal grace the external guide would exist in vain; and without that guide the grace must remain dormant. When we call the Church "Apostolic" we do not merely refer to the Apostolic Succession: we mean that her teaching is like that of the Apostles who did not fear to say, "It hath seemed good unto the Holy Ghost and unto us." That Church confesses Christ, speaks with His authority, and thus challenges Faith, proposing to man its one appropriate object, viz. the Christian Revelation in its completeness and its purity. The whole doctrine is thus held, either explicitly or implicitly, and unmixed with error; it is held as revealed by God; and it is held by a supernatural faith, which thus lays the foundation of the supernatural life.

Reason does its part, for it vindicates the divine origin and authority of the Church and the Sacred Scriptures by means of historic testimony, and evidence external and internal, as complete as such reasoning admits, and as stringent as that which determines our actions in matters of human duty or interest, where the will is not averse. The rest must be done by Faith, which crowns and authenticates right reason, just as grace consummates nature; and the exercise of Faith is rendered practicable by the presence and challenge of the Apostolic Church, as the divine Witness of a truth delivered once for all, and as its commissioned expositor. We are addressed, it is most true, as reasonable beings; but *for that reason* not as beings for whom reason is sufficient. Faith is the attribute of God's *reasonable* creature alone. The mission of the Church is evinced to reason by the "Notes" of the Church, as well as by its teaching, its miracles, and the miracle of its sustained existence—just as the mission of the Apostles was evinced by their miracles and by their teaching. It was, of course, always intellectually *possible* to attribute those miracles to evil spirits or to imposture: and it is equally possible now to meet the claims of the Church by remarking that false Churches have also claimed to speak in God's name. Were such a rejoinder not possible, revelation would be *scientifically proved* by reason alone, instead of resting on a Faith of which reason supplies the intellectual *motives*.

We thus perceive the fallacious character of that

argument which affirms that even an infallible Church would be no certain guide to us, if its claims were not demonstrated by a process of such scientific rigour that no man could resist it. Equally sophistical is it to urge that if the individual can decide for himself on the claims of the Church, he must also be competent to form true opinions on all other points of theology. As well might we say that whosoever can select a safe guide must have sagacity enough also to find his path across the mountains without a guide. Religion is built upon faith: but faith needs certain conditions for its exercise. It is now as it has ever been. Now, as in the apostolic age, an object is presented upon which faith, if it exists, is capable of finding a resting-place. The Church comes to us as sent by God. We recognise her claims at once humanly by reason, and divinely by faith, because God, Who has commissioned her, imparts to us the gift of faith, through which we can exercise the grace of spiritual discernment. That the individual should believe as she believes, animated as he is by the same Spirit, no more implies a bondage than that the hand should obey the brain. God gives the faith: the Church, through the Communion of Saints, directs it. The same divine Spirit acts at once in the Church, which He seals with His holy unction, preserves in unity, and leads into all truth, and in the heart of the individual, which He kindles, illumines, purifies, and delivers from the tyranny of self, of sense, and of "the faculty judging according to sense."

It is not, then, the ultimate uncertainty alone in which an inquiring mind is left by the rule of Private Judgment which proves that rule to be inconsistent with Faith. The *method* it involves for the attainment of knowledge is not that of Faith. For Faith it strives to substitute a principle of quasi-scientific inquiry, directed to the book of revelation, not that of nature, for its subject-matter. Let us consider this method on its moral side. As long as we are instituting a merely intellectual inquiry, we must keep our minds in a state of judicial *impartiality*. While, therefore, we are thus labouring to ascertain whether there are any sacraments, and what is the true doctrine of justification, we are all the time exercising on those important questions the virtue, not of Faith, but of impartiality. Who is to inform such a Christian student as to the limits between inquiry and infidelity? Let us assume that in youth he was taught the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation. May not "Private Judgment" challenge him to call those mysteries in question as if he had never heard of them before? During an inquiry in this sense impartial he is a sceptic, not a Christian; and he is little likely to reach the virtue of Faith through the habit of unbelief.

The Sects frequently think that Faith is exclusively the faculty of spiritual discernment, which is but one of its attributes, and not always the one earliest developed in its completeness. Submission, self-abnegation—these are also qualities implied in the

exercise of true Faith. As little children only can we enter into the kingdom of heaven, and as such only can we abide in it, and advance in it. Opinion *asserts;* Faith *confesses.* Assertion includes *self-assertion.* Confession acknowledges God by forgetting *self.* God only can rightly assert Himself: in man, who is but a Creature, such a habit is based on delusion, and involves the sin of pride, in a form the more perilous for being latent. Pride is the very instinct of Reason, when it claims to decide by itself in divine things. In taking self alone as a ground of spiritual knowledge, and as our sole guide to God, man, as it were, creates his own creator. The higher we soar, the more we need humility. For this reason the intuitions of Faith are allowed to remain obscure on earth though certain; and docility, as well as spiritual discernment, belongs to Faith. Christianity reveals to us the doctrine of a divine sacrifice and a divine condescension; and it is only through this discipline of self-sacrifice and self-abasement in the contemplative as well as in the practical part of man's being, that such a doctrine can be brought home to his heart and mind.

It is humility that imparts this character to faith; and humility itself is maintained in us by obedience not to God only, but to God's messenger whether human or heavenly. The sin of the fallen angels is believed to have consisted in their refusing to worship God in His Incarnation, when that mystery was prophetically revealed to them: and in men also the trial of humility is not seldom to obey one who is

girt with infirmity, yet bears the Divine seal. Docility is always, in Holy Scripture, the attribute of faith. Such docility will often look like credulity; but it is thus that everything Christian wears a double aspect, as seen by the Christian or by the world. That is no Christianity which escapes its reproach. Sects which despise Christ's words must despise His Church also, and those among His servants who most resemble Him. They class His Church with impostors, because false religions, or corruptions of the patriarchal religion, have also claimed that authority which must, as the instinct of the human race ever felt, be an attribute of the true one; and they appeal from it to the Bible, forgetting that the false religions have claimed their sacred books as well as their sacred priesthoods. It is thus that they class what they fancy the credulity of the Catholic with that of the Hindoo; ignoring the fact that Holy Writ is full of examples of that which might seem credulity, had not Divine Providence and Divine Grace, the two Hands of God in the world, been pleased to co-operate in leading the humble and believing to divine truth. It was thus that the Apostles followed our Lord at a word, and that those who heard them sometimes desired that the Apostolic shadows might pass over them, and were cured of their diseases. Docility is an initiative form of divine Faith. Through it we come to Christ as little children; and, in the Christian, the child lives ever on in the man. The martyrs did not lack spiritual discernment; yet none were more remarkable for docility and the

spirit of submission. It was Arius, and the other heretics, who ridiculed their humility as superstition.

The will, as well as the mind, is the seat of faith. To the latter discernment belongs, to the former submission; accordingly that only is heresy which includes by act or omission the sin of the will; and conversely a belief which does not include the submission of the will is unprofitable, even when it chances to be sound. The authority of the Church is the organ through which Divine Grace, shed abroad in the heart, trains man in the habit of submission. Obedience is not a principle merely, to be learned by precept, but a habit to be taught by providential circumstance and divine institutions. It is thus that our moral being, in its own inferior sphere, is shaped and moulded not by precept only, but by circumstance, such as the claims of the civil power, parental rule, social traditions, the weakness of childhood, the limitations of knowledge, the need of joint action, and therefore of subordination. Private Judgment excludes the corresponding discipline in the spiritual sphere. It plays fast and loose with faith, accepting the Divine Book but reserving for self the right to interpret it. Now, apart from the consideration that the same will which accepts the Bible rejects other gifts authenticated as divine by that very authority, it must be remembered that a book, though divine, is a book still, and can discharge that office only in the covenant of grace which God has assigned to it. When questioned, a book often answers with the voice of the questioner

himself. It cannot prevent him from mistaking for a divine voice the echo of his own. It cannot correct his misapprehensions, divide between the dross and the sterling metal in his interpretations, abash his presumption, restrain his precipitation, disclose the tenor of the whole before he has mastered the parts, prevent him from selecting texts according to the law of a false theory, and from distributing the subject-matter of inquiry by the method of an erroneous tradition. It cannot prevent him from finding in it what he brought to it, and trampling under foot the truths or the admonitions he most needs. It cannot enable him to distinguish between the Written Word and his own version of it, between the "mind of the Spirit" and his own mind; and therefore it cannot authenticate his own convictions, even when most firmly held, with that seal of Divine teaching, through which alone they acquire the merit of *faith*. The loss thus sustained is not less than infinite. The strength of the chain is the strength of its weakest link; and a divine book, with but a human interpreter, is not a *Divine revelation*. The principle of Private Judgment thus intercepts, by the interposition of a fallible medium, the direct communication between God and the spiritual mind of man.

Still more fatally does the same principle affect the Will. If a country without judges or rulers possessed laws, together with a vast legal literature for the interpretation of them, a literature expounded by the private judgment of individuals, habits of loyalty could

never be trained, though every citizen became as learned in the intricacies of the statute-book as village attorneys deem themselves now. Through the instrumentality, on the other hand, of the Church, the mind of the Christian is made subject to a regenerate will, and that again to the Will of God unequivocally expressed through an interpreter, speaking "with authority." Every fresh accession of knowledge is a fresh act of submission; and, literally, "every *thought*" is thus "brought into the obedience of Christ." The faith thus generated is seasoned and vivified by all the affections of the regenerate heart, which are addressed by the Church as by a mother, and trained for their noblest function—that of being the handmaids of faith. The Apostle addresses his converts as "my little children, of whom I travail again till Christ be found within you." Thus are still addressed the children of her only who claims apostolic authority, and who does not fear to command them in Christ's name. A book cannot thus address us, nor an institute, however venerable, if founded on Private Judgment, or human authority—perhaps on one that denounces as blasphemous the claim to infallibility. In the Church obedience rises to a *sacramental* dignity, by being directed to God, through an external Representative, His symbol, and His organ. Through such obedience the insight of faith is exercised without danger of human or demoniacal delusions, the latter class pre-eminently dangerous in these "spiritualistic" days. Through such authority the Church is able to show love toward

her children by giving them safety and peace, not by surrendering to them seeming privileges, which are not hers to give. Therefore it is that her children love her; and that those who have ever loved her most, and most prized her authority, are those recognised even beyond her pale as her saints—those who have had the deepest insight into the "glorious liberty" of the Gospel.

The rule of Private Judgment divests faith likewise of its vitality, and its power, by chilling the ardour of strong minds. In such minds the freezing sense of insecurity, produced by the impossibility of discriminating between faith and imaginative illusions, will reduce the religious sentiment to a low and sordid tone, mistaken for the "golden mean." Enthusiasm will, in such circumstances, commonly be the attribute only of the light and injudicious; and as such it will do as much harm as good, for in religion, as in all things, no substitute can be found for good sense. A community which cannot eliminate doubt from its theological creed has its vulnerable point, and feels it. Heroic virtue it half fears as a peril or a temptation. It has admitted the formula of nature into the region of supernatural truth, and substituted "Peradventure" for "Amen." It becomes at once reduced and transposed; and its very truths lose their substance while they retain their name. Its raptures are but poetry, its dogma but theory, its antiquity but pedantry, its forms but formality, its freedom but licence, its authority but convention, its zeal but faction, its

sobriety but sloth. Such a faith must needs abdicate and install reason in the supreme place. Such a Church may not rule; for it cannot rule by serving.

Private Judgment has its own sphere: but when it sets up a "Rule of Faith," it has lost sight, not only of the vastness and depth of Holy Scripture, and of revealed Truth, but of the pervading and multiform nature of that Christian virtue of which faith is the root. Faith has not only a special function with reference to the justification of the individual, but is also the universal bond between the redeemed race and God. It must therefore affect the whole soul, and be the health of every part, penetrating all the virtues, and imparting to them its own unity and stability. It is an adamant which God diffuses through man's whole being. It must enlighten the mind, erect the will, warm and purify the heart, live in every affection, kneel in our humility, endure in our patience. It must from the first contain the element of the infinite, yet admit of infinite increase. This cannot be its character if it boasts that it needs not the brethren, that it is entitled to its own share of the family inheritance, and that it can act for itself. Such a faith soon finds itself feeding among the husks.

The existence of a cycle of supernatural virtues, all founded upon faith, and constituting the Christian life, still maintains a traditional place in the novel theology, yet little belief is reposed in that Heroic Sanctity which is the practical embodiment of all those virtues. Except as correlative portions of one vast

system, those virtues have little meaning, and when deprived of their solid foundation they totter to their fall. The various elements of the supernatural world, as of the natural, correspond with each other, and must exist in harmony and due subordination, or not at all. Faith is the immovable axis of that world; and the light that illumines the face of that world is the Knowledge of God. Having lost the true idea of faith as an organ of certainty, the modern sects have too generally lost also the idea of the supernatural world which it supports, and of the divine knowledge by which that world is irradiated. Insensibly men have drifted away from a true estimate of divine knowledge, as something supernatural, hallowing, elevating, the source and the health of all the Christian virtues. This is one reason why theology is now disparaged under the name of dogma. Men who would hardly avow as much, regard doctrinal knowledge as but a series of logical positions, at most subjectively true, or relatively useful, the result of much idle curiosity, and the cause of much mischievous contention. Such an estimate would not be unjust if our knowledge of divine things came indeed from beneath, not from above. Speculations which had been useful as an intellectual exercise might well, if of human origin, become a spiritual tyranny, when hardened by time. This low estimate of divine knowledge proceeds from that philosophy which regards *belief*, in religious matters, as a thing less certain than *knowledge*, instead of a thing greater

—a knowledge in which an elevated will, as well as a spiritualised mind, bears its part. It is of importance to observe that according to our estimate of Christian knowledge must be our estimate of Christianity as a whole. Doctrine was revered in the time of the martyrs. Why is it not now? It is the necessity of a half-materialist age to invert the process through which the mutual relations of spiritual and of sensuous things should be regarded, interpreting the higher by the lower, not the lower by the higher. If this spurious method of interpretation be adopted, it must be used consistently. If Faith mean no more than Opinion, the whole Christian scheme must shrink into but a complex piece of intellectual mechanism. The idea of God must dwindle proportionately. His love can be but benevolence; His paternity but a metaphor; His justice but an arbitrary formula; to impute jealousy or wrath to Him will seem but a dream of the envious, or the angry: to believe that He works for His glory, will be stigmatised as imputing to Him human littleness. In short, according to this scheme of inverted thought, God Himself would be but Man, flung to a distance, and magnified by an optic glass; and all our knowledge of divine things would consist but of human knowledge misapplied. The same fatal error depraves our estimate of religious knowledge in its moral and in its intellectual relations. The same misconception which prevents our regarding divine knowledge as certain, and faith as an organ of certainty, hinders us also from recognising such knowledge as

spiritual and vital. A few words will suffice to indicate this truth, though to illustrate it adequately a volume would be required.

If man were to find out God by his proper strength, then, indeed, as man is frail and imperfect, his knowledge of God would by necessity share that imperfection, and would remain (1st) doubtful, (2d) subjective, (3d) barren. If, on the other hand, man's knowledge of divine things comes from God, it must share the character of God, and be certain, objective, fruitful. Probable knowledge on matters that belong to the supernatural order is not knowledge, but conjecture; and that such knowledge can never add a cubit to our spiritual stature is a fact which reason asserts, and which faith does not care to deny. Yet there is something in man's lower nature which sometimes makes him prefer the lower to the higher knowledge, and found a boast upon what is, in reality, but the poverty and nakedness of unassisted humanity. His pride prefers the position of a discoverer to that of the recipient of a gift. This propensity is indicated by the predilection in modern times for natural theology, which, more easily than Revelation, can get itself regarded as human discovery. It is the same instinct in a less developed form which, assuming the truth of the Bible, seeks a key to its interpretation in Private Judgment, rather than in the divine witness of the Church. The very boast of this false method is its confutation. Knowledge which, either in its origin, or in our mode of deducing it from its original fount,

is merely human, for that very reason is not divine: and if it claims to be religion, it has the fatal defect of not being revelation, just in proportion as it is discovery. It is not difficult to see that the same circumstance which makes such knowledge inconsistent with the essence and true Idea, makes it likewise incompatible with the end of religion. If our religious knowledge reached us by the method of experimental science, its results would be scientific alone: if it were accorded to us through a series of intuitions, like those of abstract science, it would *compel* belief, and so annihilate probation. In all such cases alike the knowledge which comes not from above must fail to lift man's soul to the heights.

But far different is it with that Knowledge which comes from above, of which Christ is the source, and the Church of Christ the channel. Such knowledge of God is an effluence from God, a light sent forth into the face of human kind, from Him the Father of Lights, and from that perfect Manhood which reigns in heaven. Our sunrise is His glory manifested; and this is the reason that it comes "with healing on its wings." It has a spiritual efficacy because it comes from Him who is a Spirit, and who must be worshipped, not only "in Spirit," but "in Truth." It is deiform in character, and therefore it is deific. Its nature corresponds with the Divine Attributes, and transfigures that human intelligence, which indeed is capable of receiving it only because it was itself originally formed after the Divine Image. If it does

not include a quality corresponding with the Divine attributes of certainty and fixedness, it must fall equally short of the Divine character in all other respects. It cannot be spiritual, or pure, or eternal, or absolute, like Him, if it be uncertain like us. If, on the other hand, our knowledge be certain, as coming from God, then indeed, but only then, it must also be sanctifying.

The knowledge which comes from on high includes properties distinct from those that address the intelligence, as light possesses other qualities, chemical, magnetic, and vital, beside those that address the eye. Such knowledge is therefore capable of constituting an instrument of living communication between the Creator and the creature. This is the reason why knowledge is commonly spoken of in Holy Writ as the characteristic type of religion. The knowledge that comes from man, on the other hand, even though it related to divine things, could no more ripen the harvests of the soul than lamps and torches could mature the fruits of the earth. Such knowledge may be a literature or a philosophy; but it lacks the differentia of religion, properly so called. It constitutes no living bond between the Creator and His creature. It is a biblical literature with those sects whose knowledge of divine things rests but on human and fallible criticism: among establishments it adds a religious sanction to social order: and it glitters, a mystic philosophy, before psychologists who look for God only in their own souls, and who know not that what is *deepest*

within us is descried only through the light that comes from above. A Religion it is not, except so far as it contradicts its own Rule of Faith, and as—an undercurrent of ancient and divine tradition flowing beneath the brittle ice of human speculations—it enriches dead opinions with somewhat of the character of faith.

That knowledge of God, then, alone is sacred and sanctifying which comes from God directly and unmarred by the obtrusion of self. It alone is supernatural, and therefore stands on the level of Christianity; is vital, and therefore capable of realising the Christian aim. It elevates and exercises all the virtues. Coming from the heights it sounds the depths, and therefore presupposes submission, not assertion, in the act of recipiency. It carries God with it in every ray. He it is who exists in those beams, and in each of them, sacramented in light. This is the knowledge capable of expanding into the Beatific Vision as the optic nerve into the retina of the eye. Such is the reward reserved for faith, and the obedience included in faith. Opinion, on the other hand, has no such latent property; for nature, when unaided, or when, for the aids God has given, the aids man has chosen have been substituted, includes no principle through which man is capable of conversing with spiritual realities. Its "little systems have their day," and amuse us while here below; but they cease where mere human forms of perception cease. The world has played with them till it is tired of its plaything; it is now sick of their petty restraints and peevish inconstancy. It

suspects the existence of a world mightier than itself, deeper, loftier, more lasting—the supernatural world. It knows that if such a world exists, the way of access to it can neither be found in the statute-book, nor in the volumes of the scribes, nor amid the eddies of public opinion. It remembers that question, "Lord, to whom should we go?" and sees a significance in the record that Mary found her lost Child when she sought Him in the Temple of God, and not among her kinsfolk and acquaintance.

By some it will be asked, "Is not Private Judgment a manly thing? Does there really remain no place for it?" The answer is this. The place for Private Judgment, or but human faith, is man's total world except that one spot which is too sacred for it, and where Heaven meets Earth. The vast and splendid spheres of man's Art and of Thought belong to Private Judgment; for though there is no department of mature life, private or public, of Art, Science, or Letters, into which the principles of mutual counsel and mutual aid fail to enter, yet so long as it remains with ourselves to decide what counsellors we shall select, and obey, we are still within the domain of Private Judgment. That potentate has been extending his lawful patrimony immeasurably during many centuries, and need the less grudge to leave uninvaded the spot which God keeps in His own hands—that is, the parish church with its altar and its graves. That spot, if annexed, would add little either to man's harvest fields or his hunting fields. It covers

little ground, though it points high. It is reserved, not that the hard heir who "strides about the lands," may be amerced of anything which a manly heart would claim, but that through that sacred precinct he may be enriched with a gift greater than all his possessions besides—a gift without which the rest would neither be secure nor remain blessings while his. Are we robbed of our own because one spot is kept inviolate for the descending feet of those Powers from above who visit our earthly life? We may dispense with lesser gifts, or accept them conditionally; but the knowledge of God is a gift with which man cannot dispense, and which he cannot accept except on God's conditions. Those conditions are that each man should receive it from God, and through Christ's Body which is declared to us to be the Temple of His Spirit, and *as such* alone the "Pillar and the Ground of the Truth." We belong to one Race, the Human; and while we defer to that tie we receive from it as much as earthly life needs, *i.e.* neighbourly help and probable knowledge. But we belong in a much higher sense to God's Church, because the Second Adam in whom it is constituted is Divine as well as Human. Through her, not from her, we have Divine knowledge and the Divine Life. The incorporation is closer, the obedience more absolute, the reward more sovereign. When the Revelation was given the Kingdom was founded. Those whose resolve, fixed and final, is to cling to that Revelation should cling to that Kingdom also.

Luther, the most practical representative of "Private Judgment," though not the most avowed one, is himself eminently represented by his well-known saying that the doctrine of "justification," by which he meant his own doctrine on that subject, one little heard of before his time, is no less than the *Articulus ecclesiæ stantis vel cadentis*, the "test of the Church standing or falling." There is a remarkable connection between that statement and the "Rule of Faith" on which he and his acted. That doctrine, which is the test of the Christian Church standing or falling, must surely be that primary doctrine on which the other Christian doctrines depend, and of which they are characteristically illustrations and applications. We know that if in a drawing or map what should stand highest is degraded to a lower place, the confusion does not rest there: the whole must be a distortion. Now the place in Christian Theology which Luther claimed for his Doctrine of Justification is no less than that one which the whole Church, both in the East and the West, had claimed from the beginning for the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity. Luther had no choice. It was easy for the most uninformed "Private Judgment" to reach by a bound to a strong "sensation of positiveness" on the subject of man's justification; but it was as impossible for it to reach a genuine "sense of certainty" as to fathom the countless mysteries, respecting the Holy Trinity, which had absorbed the attention of Councils and Fathers for centuries of debate. The Church, when the novel

religions arose, stood still on the ancient ways. Her "Rule of Faith" was involved in her existence. It was included in her earliest Confession of Faith, the Apostles' Creed, and also in that Creed when expanded into the Nicene. Those brief summaries included all. Their articles were very few, but very far-reaching. They confessed one God, the Creator of all things, the Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, with their respective offices—the Incarnation of the Second Person, and the Descent of the Third Person at the Feast of Pentecost—and in immediate connection with these, the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church with her offices. The Holy Spirit, *Digitus Paternæ Dextræ*, the finger of the Father's Right Hand, wrote perpetually on the forehead of the Church those august Truths which the Incarnate Son had revealed to the Apostles; and what He wrote on her brow, she, obeying her Divine Lord's command that she should teach the nations, wrote on the heart of each among her children. She who, through the Holy Spirit, dispensed the "one Baptism for the remission of sins" was competent, through the same Spirit, and she alone, to instruct the Baptized. Thus in the sacred Chain of Divine Truth, as well as of the Divine Life, no link was wanting. The Infinite Creator, infinitely distant, had drawn infinitely near to the humblest of His creatures. Between them stood no barrier in the form of mere human opinion; neither that of authority exercised by separated and opposed bodies which could not teach by the one

Spirit; nor that of a supposed consensus of Fathers interrogated by isolated men of learning, and to whom the simple had no access; nor that densest of barriers between God and the Soul, an overweening Intellect setting up to teach itself when its true place was that of a learner not a teacher. It was indeed the reign of Immanuel, God with us.

IV.

THE PLAGUE OF CONTROVERSY.

Never, except at the periods of religious wars, was theology so much mixed up with social life as it has been of late. It has become a question for households, and a question for statesmen. By the latter it is often regarded chiefly as a cause of confusion almost amounting to persecution—a persecution by which religion retaliates on society for the persecutions she herself once underwent. Our aim here is to show that it is the state and society, not genuine theology, which has produced the confusion; and that the remedy is to be found in plain dealing, moral courage, and inquiry charitable and just, not in disparaging assertions respecting doctrine or fair discussion. Protestant theology has descended from the scientific heights, to that arena in which it is often jostled by the accidents and eccentricities of the hour. The perplexities of the present time are also largely to be accounted for by the deeds of the chief actors in the sixteenth century. Those of the seventeenth century were men of a very different order.

In a country, the institutions of which work efficiently

together so much on the principle of balance, as in England, many anomalies are to be expected; but of all the anomalies which affect her, those belonging to matters theological are surely the most singular. "What! more theology! are we never, then, to have rest? Who will expel from our coasts the demon of speculation?" Such are the greetings with which each new essay on theology is commonly met by those portions of the community devoted to political or to practical, to scientific or to literary avocations. Such salutations are not encouraging. May we not ask—How comes it that England can neither get on with nor without controversy? If it insists on discussing theology, in spite of the lovers of broad views, business, or "practical piety,"—why can it not reach results? If it despairs of results, why cannot it keep clear of controversy? The chief questions discussed are among the most ennobling with which an inhabitant of this world can deal, even when they are considered exclusively in their political, social, and moral relations. The supremacy of the Holy See is not merely, in an ecclesiastical sense, a question of moment;—in a social point of view the dogma is hardly one of a less profound interest: and little, indeed, of philosophy can belong to that statesman, historian, or ethical teacher who has never thought it worth his while to meditate seriously on the question, whether the largest of human societies, one with which the various civil and national societies of the world are at all times so strangely linked, be

itself a religious monarchy or a republic. Again, is there, or is there not, in the world a body not of this world, a body, no matter what its constitution, at least in some sense *organic*, and charged to witness to revealed truth, to maintain and diffuse the Gospel? Is such a body the guest of every Christian nation? If so, it must have its rights of some sort; its duties also; principles for the adjustment of its allegiance to Cæsar with its allegiance to God:—and consequently to ignore it or reduce it to servitude, must be, at least, as grave an error as any violation of international law. So much few will deny. Again, a foreign allegiance must ever be a contradiction and a snare. What, then, it is natural to ask, does a foreign allegiance in ecclesiastical matters mean? Is it a canonical allegiance, revering the whole ecclesiastical body, and paid especially to the head of the ecclesiastical order? Or is it an allegiance virtually unlimited, paid by the spiritual to the civil power in each country? Again, the "traditions of men" are confessedly a false rule of faith in divine things. Whether, then, are we to designate by that name the traditional and quasi-authoritative teaching of separated bodies, modern, local, and without even a claim to infallibility, or the perpetual Faith of that body which alone professes to witness to the "truth as it is in Jesus" through the unerring aid of that Spirit Who spake by the prophets, and Whom our Lord, on His departure, sent to His Apostles that He might lead them into all truth, and recall all

things to their mind? In that sense the Christian Faith must be, inclusively, a tradition while parents bring their children up as Christians and not as unbelievers. Again, is religion a matter of Certainty, or of Opinion merely, as in the time that preceded the Christian revelation? Is there any such thing as truth, or is truth relative only, like sensation? How far has our knowledge respecting that foundation of all knowledge advanced since the time that Pilate inquired, "What is truth?" asking of Him, the Living Truth, who stood at that moment before the inquirer, and who was by him condemned? If there be a Revealed Truth, does the well-being of individuals and of nations stand related to it in any special manner, or is it a thing apart? Is it a duty to believe Revelation and to love God; and is the Will, or is it not, responsible for convictions, and for affections, as well as for acts?

These are questions neither less important, nor more hard of solution, than many of those with which the haters of theology concern themselves. There are countless questions besides in which they could not fail, if free from panic and prejudice, to take a deep interest. Was the Papal supremacy, considered as a historical question, the "masterpiece of Satan" from the beginning? or was it, for centuries, as the most enlightened recent Protestant historians, such as Macaulay and Guizot, have admitted, the great protector of Europe from feudal barbarism, nay, from the Mahometan yoke, and the

nurse of all our liberties and civilisation? Four centuries ago the great danger that assailed the civilisation and freedom of Europe, the establishment of the Turks at Constantinople, was, as every reader of Gibbon knows, the result of the Greek schism, the Eastern Empire having been by it so cut off from the sympathies of the West that, in its isolation, it was unable to resist the onset of the Ottomans. The great danger which, in our day, assails the civilisation and freedom of Europe, proceeds from Russia, whose power, if once established at Constantinople, can hardly fail to domineer over the world. But what constitutes the real difficulty of the case? Is it not found in the circumstance that the sympathies of the Christians of European Turkey, three-fourths of the total population, gravitate toward the Czar, the real head of their Church? If they were Catholics, and if their sympathies found a centre in Rome, not in St. Petersburg, would not much of the difficulty be removed? Here, again, the Greek schism is the root of the evil; and a philosophic Protestant statesman might well inquire, when studying the mutual relations of the civil and ecclesiastical powers, whether a Christian caliphate may not be a far more dangerous thing than a papacy, and whether the very safest form of ecclesiastical government may not be one which finds its centre in a power essentially spiritual, and, only in an accidental sense, temporal? Once more, is monasticism an unnatural institute, or have one thousand five hundred years proved that in it is

upheld the standard of a supernatural life, possible to grace?—are convents the strongholds of tyranny and corruption? or have we owed to them the preservation of knowledge, as well as the illustration of those Evangelical Counsels, in which Christian morals culminate, and through which the first commandment retains, in the estimate of Christendom, that place of supremacy which it refuses to share even with our duty to our neighbour? But it is needless to proceed. A very little reflection suffices to show us that on human as well as divine grounds, and with reference to every species of intellectual interest, philosophical, ethical, historical, and æsthetical, the problems really most worthy of attention, on the part of a reasoning being, a moral agent, and a large-hearted humanist, who can with truth say, "Nihil humanum a me alienum puto," are no other than those which ultimately resolve themselves into that theology which was at one time entitled the "Mater Scientiarum," and which is at present secretly regarded by too many as the greatest of pests.

To be without interest on such subjects is to renounce all part in what is gravest in human things, whether belonging to the contemplative or to the practical order. How is it that in this country the supreme of questions is just that one which, in countless cases, the studious will not study, the very name of which incenses and disorders especially the considerate and sedate, and from the face of which the robust and self-confident fly panic-stricken with more

than the terror of children? If dogma be an evil, how comes it that most men, notwithstanding, insist on creeds? If we are to take our stand on the distinction between fundamental truths and theological subtleties, how comes it that there is no inquiry from which many shrink more than from one respecting the mode in which we may discriminate between the class they think essential, and that one which they denounce as mischievous? They are often grave, and, as far as their position in this matter permits, consistent men: and there is much that is touching and edifying in the fidelity with which they practice the duties they recognise. How then do they fail to see that the very first of duties, compliance with which can alone attach religious value to their virtues in other respects, must be to ascertain, at any cost, what is the *authentic version* of God's Revelation to man, if they believe that He has given us a Revelation? We are not individually capable of such inquiry, and will only, they say, be lured by it into an interminable labyrinth. Indeed! Then the Reformation must have followed a Will-o'-the-Wisp in asserting the principle of Private Judgment. Why not consider the claims of an opposite system, which kept Christianity together for so many centuries, and which diffused it over so many lands? But, it will be answered, the principle of authority means slavery in religious matters. Does it? In that case nothing remains but the principle of Private Judgment. Why not exercise it then on this very

question, the Rule of Faith, the determination of which may possibly render innumerable further inquiries needless; and ascertain whether, if in scientific matters our liberty of thought is not interfered with by the impossibility of contesting primary axioms, and could receive no vindication from our throwing off the yoke of the multiplication-table, the sphere of Supernatural Truth may not include a provision through which we can exercise religious faith, and attain to certain knowledge, not only without abdicating our faculties, but as the only means of really using them? As there are acts which we can only do individually, so there are others which we can only do collectively, and in our national capacity. May there not be truths also, which we can discover separately, and yet, again, other realms of truth which the human race can only conquer and retain through that collective unity which is called the Church? Surely we are bound at least not to assert contradictories. The real opinion of many of those to whom we have referred, is nothing so vague as the doctrine of Private Judgment, or so contradictory as a Private Judgment which claims to investigate everything, and yet will not allow its own claims to be investigated. On the contrary, they believe practically that a man should continue to hold what he has been taught in the body in which he was brought up. But let them be consistent. Is he to hold such a form of doctrine by believing it, or by professing it only? If by believing it, must he not

believe also in the authority of the body which has been his teacher? If then, authority be, indeed, after all, the principle by which he goes, is he not called on to decide, at least, between contending claims to authority? Is it possible for him to believe that a hundred sects which differ in many important matters, and agree in declaring that they are all alike human and fallible bodies, can, notwithstanding, be teachers of Divine Truth, each of which is authoritative in its place? Is it a duty to believe transubstantiation in Spain, and to deny it in Prussia? Who does not see that this is to substitute profession for belief, and to believe nothing except that Truth either does not exist, or is not attainable by man, and, at the same time, that to acknowledge even thus much of belief (though to oneself only) is disagreeable and dangerous? Contradictories will not coalesce merely because we have not time for speculation; and to act upon principles the opposite of those which, whether as Catholics or as Protestants, we profess, is inconsistent with probity and self-respect. In short, the recognition of a Revelation, like that of a Moral Sense, or of Theism, involves, whether or not they prove embarrassing, corresponding obligations and conclusions.

To a certain extent, however, a Catholic must sympathise with those persons, not in what they say, but in what they mean. As he sympathises with the Puritan so far as Puritanism recognises the supernatural order of grace, the dogmatic character of

Christianity, the dignity and worth of Truth, so he can sympathise with Latitudinarians thus far that he too believes that Latitudinarianism is practically the comment which time passes on the experiment of Private Judgment, and makes a just confession that, on the basis established by the revolt of the sixteenth century, truth is incapable of being attained with certainty, while, in the absence of certainty, it is little worth contending for. Many of our anti-theological friends would, if from curiosity alone, strive earnestly to find religious truth if they thought that anything more was to be gained by such labours than the fertilisation of the field in which the treasure was supposed to lie. Others, though incurious as to abstract knowledge, and in spiritual things little habituated to observe the close connection between the rays of light and heat, would yet make great and generous sacrifices to avert those public evils which follow from religious divisions. The same obstacles have beset them again and again in all their honourable efforts to promote the wellbeing of the nation. Whether they endeavour to establish a vast system of education, or to improve prison discipline, the same difficulty, a persecuting Proteus, flies up in their face. Now a godless scheme of education scandalises the public; and now a godly scheme directed by the High-Church party of England, the Puritan party of Ireland, or the Catholics, terrifies it yet more. The anti-theological philosophers may dream their dream; but the practical statesman

discovers that, however desirable it may be to keep religion and politics apart, or to divide between religious sentiment and religious conviction, the attempt is as vain as would be the endeavour to separate between those easily distinguishable things, the mathematical and the physical attributes of bodies. They find that the imponderable agents of the social world are often the most powerful, and that the world in which we have our political home is encompassed by a spiritual sphere, as by a firmament, in which abide, day and night, the sunshine that cherishes, the afflicting but salutary storm, and the retributive plague. They find that, whether they will or not, rituals imply priestly claim, and that articles ask exposition. They find that though statesmen may assure the Church that, "of all men who can read and write, the clergy are the most ignorant, and the most mischievous," human affairs notwithstanding need their aid unless society is to fall asunder, and communism, a "universal wolf," be allowed to propound the doctrine of Christian brotherhood and universal equality according to the version of its own un-mysterious theology. They find that dissent is the natural re-action from the coldness of Establishmentarianism, and that to repress it is a vain attempt;—but they find, also, that schisms are wounds through which the life blood, both of religion and social peace, escapes. Wearied and perplexed, they are sometimes tempted to echo the cry of the pagan, "Quanta Religio potuit suadere

malorum." In their wish for peace the Catholic must go along with them: from their cry of "peace, peace, where there is no peace," he is bound to dissent. That truth exists externally to, and independently of man, has been actually communicated to man, may be known with certainty by him, and when known becomes the food of all devout affections, and life-spring of all manly faith and righteous actions, the Catholic believes. It is not therefore in the direction of "latitude" that he looks for peace. Will the Latitudinarian tell us, at least, where the latitude lies, and what are its limits? If he would do this, and yet keep clear of theology, he must offer a higher reward than has yet been offered for finding the longitude.

If he cannot tell us what latitude amounts to in the concrete, will he tell us what it is essentially, and in the abstract? It is comprehensiveness! But what makes a system comprehensive? The number of doctrines it defines and harmonises? Then the Catholic must be the most, and the Latitudinarian the least comprehensive of systems. Or, the number of religionists united by the exclusion of disputed points? How happens it, then, that the Latitudinarians, whatever their accomplishments and attainments, have commonly proved the smallest of sects, rather a clique than a sect, a clique averse to mysticism, dogmatism, tradition, and sacerdotal influence . . . fond of freedom . . . fond of thought; but assuredly not successful either in carrying religious thought to

conclusive results, or in imparting to the inquirer the glorious liberty of truth? There are, no doubt, devout as well as indevout Latitudinarians; to the latter the "broad school" is but a "booking office" of the "broad way." It would be a grave injustice, however, to the earnest and reverent among them to confound them either with the multitude of the worldly or of the infidel. Confining our attention then to those reluctant theologians of the "broad school," who really accept or desire to accept Revelation, and promote spiritual good of man, may we not ask whether the circumstance that they have ever been a small number compared with their opponents of other schools does not suggest at least the thought that religious systems are comprehensive, not in proportion to the number of litigated questions they eliminate, but in proportion to the number of human wants for which they recognise a Divine provision? Truths are among those wants, for truths are Truth developed according to the development and needs of man. Accordingly, the religion which confesses the greatest number of revealed truths, and establishes them upon the adamantine foundation of that faith which uses at once and directs reason, is also the one which reckons fourfold more adherents than all the sects conjointly.

Can the plague of controversy be stayed by suggesting to controversialists that, if they agree in nothing else, at least they can agree to differ? The state of England is the answer. The Established

Church has in these latter times included three "schools," which differ from each other in their principles, probably as much as the sects exterior to it differ each from each. One of the sects is a new one. In spirit indeed it seems neither sectarian nor aggressive. It disclaims the character of a sect, and is generally known by the name of Irvingism. It includes a large number of intellectual, devout, and eccentric persons. Their earnestness is evinced by their paying bona-fide tithes, building several of the noblest churches of recent times in this land, and, last, not least, by their going to church at six in the morning. Their prayer-book is "High-Church," eminently, including a liturgy which, if they had a priesthood possessed of orders and jurisdiction, would be the Mass; the reservation of what is deemed the Blessed Sacrament, the seven Sacraments, auricular but not "compulsory" confession, Extreme Unction, &c. &c. In aspiration they are Catholic in principle, but nondescript in position. Their ideas are often noble, elevated, and deep; but their facts have the misfortune of being mistakes. Private Judgment has been described as meaning "every man his own Pope;"—so their theology might be described as Popery without a Pope. Their system is, of course, one of the pale reflections which the orb of Catholic Faith casts down into the troubled and turbid tides of public opinion. It is a High-Churchism aërial, not earthly; free to roam, but unable to stand;—one which has slipped its chains, but has also cut itself off

from national traditions and social conventions. Like the naked child, at the end of Christabel, who, "beauteous in a wilderness," moves about in a climate where "night is more beloved than day," the gentle genius of the religion that knows no name, wanders vaguely, gathering every now and then a new fruit from phantasmal branches or visionary hands, and shily contemplating a range of spiritual scenery which

> "Hangeth like a picture fair
> In the rich and shadowy air."

It has, however, one very serious and important side. It witnesses, as Cardinal Newman well remarks, to two great Catholic doctrines, viz., the perpetuity in Christ's Church, both of the Pentecostal gift and of the Apostolical order, the latter represented by the Apostolic See. Among the new religions is one of American growth. It belongs rather to the genus gnome than to the genus sylph. It is called Mormonism, and aspires to be an effeminate Western Mahometanism. It has its prophet, its new book, its polygamy, and perhaps may one day have its sword.

It is hardly necessary to point out the close connection between religious and political feuds. Scotland has now her "Free Church," which will prove a dangerous enemy to the Presbyterian Establishment. On the Continent the communists and socialists, who carry fearlessly out the principles which reject the historical and hierarchical elements in society, and

who resolve everything either into *Individualism*, or into such combination as is based exclusively on *human will*, have discovered who is indeed the enemy whom they have to fear; what power is that which gives majesty to sceptres, sanction to law, bounds to caprice, order to society; which favours the progress of civilisation alike when it drags her triumphal chariot up-hill, and when it acts as a salutary drag; which harmonises the lower world by voices from a higher sphere, and exorcises seductive political ideals by a sure hope of that future world in which the imperfections of our transitional state are redressed. The Revolutionists despise the warfare with religious shadows, and turn their steel against what they know to have substance. They have sworn to exterminate the Church, and that See which is its unity, its glory, and its strength. The kings and states have also, in part, learned from experience; and, like the tyrant who, when the waves rose around his boat, ordered the chains to be removed from William Tell, the heroic man alone capable of steering it, have, in several instances, shown themselves as anxious to set the Church free as they once were to enslave her. For many sequent centuries, even revolutions themselves meant little more than a dynastic change, the result of disputed successions and family quarrels, and thus were in one sense political counterparts of those ecclesiastical catastrophes, the Eastern and the Western schisms, each of which, deplorable as it was, proceeded on principles the opposite of that put forward in

Private Judgment. The revolutions of later times have been of a kind as different from that of the mediæval revolutions as earthquake is different from storm. They have been social revolutions; and each has approximated more closely than the last to that great democratic anarchy which, if reserved for the world, will be the greatest scourge that has ever afflicted it, and the most memorable confutation of human pride. Is it wonderful that many of the most thoughtful among European statesmen and philosophers are asking themselves what was the origin of a chain of convulsions that threatens to have no end; and whether there may not be a connection between the peril which at present undermines Europe, and that spirit which, in the revolt of the sixteenth century, flung aside like a dream that world-wide polity which had been the basis of Europe's social institutes, and nursed the infancy of the oldest monarchies? Is it wonderful that they should ask whether the Spirit which tempted that adventure be not in the world still? whether the convulsions that repeat themselves be not echoes of that one which heralded his uprising? whether the omens which the unthinking alone disregard be not the trembling of a world shaken by the steps of that Spirit as he rushes, pursued by the Orestean Furies, the avengers of sacrilege and matricide, down precipice after precipice, and into the gulf prepared for him?

Meantime it is certain that, whatever our wishes may be, as a matter of fact, religious must ever

engender social confusion. Let us confine our attention to our own country. What proportion of the imperial legislation of the last half century has been spent in discussing the burthens of the dissenters? Have their relations to the nation at large arrived yet at a satisfactory settlement? Have they never impeded pacification with Ireland? Do not dissenters express some curiosity to know, especially as they increase in landed property and self-respect, why they are, beside supporting their own clergy, building their own chapels, schools, &c., to pay tithes for the support of a Church which they regard as erroneous in its teaching, unjust in its claims, and worse than all, a half-way-house to Popery? It is easy to answer, "Tithe is a charge subject to which you buy your land:" but not less easy is the rejoinder: "It is a charge which was intended to provide for the religious wants of those possessing and of those living on the land. My neighbour pays as I do for his land, it is true: but he gets it plus his religious ministrations, whereas, I get mine minus my needs in such matters."

And the Catholic horizon . . . is that free from all ominous signs? Let a Protestant speak for us. Sir Robert Peel, no controversialist and no idealist, but a man capable of facing facts, which few are, gave his country a salutary warning. He concluded his speech when introducing an increased and permanent Maynooth grant, by a significant statement. After recapitulating the manifold sources of British prosperity,

and the reasons for hope as to its continuance, he ended in words such as these: "There is another side. I see a cloud, no larger than a man's hand, on the horizon; but it widens as it approaches us. It is that of religious strife. Make peace in time. Great trials may lie before you in the shock of nations: but all trials can be met by a free, an enlightened, and a united people." No one had a better right to warn. A man of known courage, he twice made great sacrifices to avert strife in the chief forms in which it threatened Great Britain. He carried Catholic Emancipation, and repealed the Corn-Laws. These measures probably saved England from convulsion in the year 1848. But the religious disunion . . . has that, too, diminished? Not even in the year 1829, nor at the time of the Gordon riots, had it reached an extent comparable to that which has been witnessed since the death of the lamented statesman already referred to. The year of the "Ecclesiastical Titles Act" will not soon be forgotten; even if soon repealed, its effects will long endure. No sooner had the Gorham Case ceased to beat the tocsin than the word "Hierarchy" was heard, and immediately the nation swarmed. Meetings of every imaginable sort were held in all parts of the kingdom . . . meetings of parishes, of dioceses, of rural deaneries, of corporations. Noblemen of liberal principles convened their counties, and made speeches in praise of "progress" and against the "Cultus Sanctorum;" admirals in the navy quaked about the Scarlet Woman; the

Universities went up to the Queen . . . in short, one of the wisest nations in the world went mad, and stood for months together gesticulating furiously, a spectacle to an astonished world. Parliament met and one whole session was given, almost exclusively, to theology, in a political guise. Why? Because a nation violently anti-theological could not see the distinction between claims, existing, or professing to exist, only in the court of conscience, and claims which, like those of a civil or political character, are, either *de jure* or *de facto*, of a coactive character. It was in vain that the Bishop of Exeter explained this distinction in a letter to the Queen; a distinction without which it would have been easy to show that every Anglican Bishop was an embodied and perpetual aggression against all the dissenters in his diocese. It was in vain that every Catholic penny catechism showed that the Papal Supremacy has ever been, and must ever be, a universal claim, but that it is a spiritual one also, and therefore is no more coactive "in foro externo" than the universal claims of the Apostles were. It was in vain to point out that the Papal Supremacy, being a universal claim or nothing, whatever ecclesiastical mission and jurisdiction rest on it, must be, in precisely the same sense, a repudiation of the Royal Supremacy, whether they be embodied in a national hierarchy, in Vicars Apostolic, in priests, or in deacons. All was in vain. The ploughman is aware that his hand is not fine enough to manage the threads which the factory children can manage: but

an anti-theological nation would not believe that any one in the world could understand better than itself the commonplaces of theology. The consequence was a session spent in theological declamation and legislation. The Bill was passed; but it was never once carried into practical effect. A Hierarchy fourteen centuries old was not reduced to the condition of an Apostolic Mission in China or Japan. But the measure was not barren. The friendly relations between many members of that Hierarchy and the Government suddenly ceased; but their conditions on the subjects of religious independence remained unchanged.

The problem, then, on the solution of which, as the most sagacious of recent statesmen perceived, so much depended, has not been solved. The cloud has advanced, and is advancing. The Sphinx propounds her riddle again and again, and will, sooner or later, enforce the penalty. Interruptions have taken place before now in the fight; but "the plague of controversy" has ever burst up again more fiercely than ever through the obstacles that suppressed it for a moment. Puritanism met many checks: but it was not subdued. Equally retentive of life has the High-Church system proved. The Protector Somerset might pull down churches to build his own palace, while obsequious prelates were preparing a reformed edition of a Prayer Book which they themselves, together with both Houses of Parliament, had a few months before attributed to the Holy Ghost—still the High Church

school could bide its time. Elizabeth might persecute that Church, the communion of which she had received at her coronation. A few years later a devout and learned recluse would search the whole armoury of Holy Church for weapons in defence of Episcopacy, and wish for life only that he might finish his "eight books of Ecclesiastical Polity." A Baxter might write the ethics of Rebellion; a Bunyan might invest the dry bones of Puritanism with the purple trappings of a mythic romance; a Milton might vindicate polygamy, regicide, and Arianism, with the same domineering eloquence and sun-clad splendour of illustration with which he had inveighed against Babylon and Anti-Christ: a Cromwell might use the "wholesome and preventive shears" to dock, now the mitres of bishops, and now the phylacteries of "old priest-writ large:" a William might appropriate the sacred Hebrew monarchy of the Stuarts, and bequeath in return an established Presbyterianism in Scotland, and an endowed Presbyterianism in Ulster. Still, the High Church school lived on, and has never risen up with more vigour than in its latest resuscitation. But what have been its consequences? One of them at least is this. Controversy has taken up its abode in half the households of the English upper classes.

From a consideration of the malady itself, and of its deplorable consequences, it is natural to proceed to another question. Why is it that the country which dislikes theology most should be the one most

afflicted with theological controversy? The answer is to be found in the peculiar character of the Established Church, which leads to two results—the first being, that discussion can never, in it, arrive at any final result; the second being, that circumstances render exclusiveness logically essential to the theological position of the contending parties, and consequently, that the right to differ can only be acknowledged as an abstraction. If in the Catholic Church disputes arise respecting matters hitherto undefined, the method by which, in the Divine Science, investigations are to be carried on, and conclusions reached, is as well known as the method for prosecuting inquiry in any department of natural science. The ingenuity of self-will may prolong the struggle; and even when error has been formally condemned by the Church, equivocators may for a time rejoin that the condemned propositions are, of course, false, but that the books to which they are ascribed do not really contain them. Such arts, however, cannot long avail. They fail as they failed in the case of Jansenism. Men of good will and common sense have had the guidance which man needs, and have used it; and the contumacious may make a schism *from* the Church, but cannot long maintain one *in* it. The Catholic councils and the decisions of the Holy See have ever constituted a plain and practical mode by which the allegations of heretics could be tested; and the result has been that, new denials having produced new definitions, the strongest efforts made by the

enemies of Truth have tended only to place it before men in a clearer light. That the contest has often been protracted through the perverseness of individuals, no one denies. Such evils have been accidental and transient: they have arisen from abnormal circumstances; they have been, obviously, not illustrations of the Church's ordinary working, but irregularities and exceptions. A caviller may, if he pleases, fix his regard on them alone: but in so doing he resembles one who can see in the sun nothing but its spots, in the orbits of the planets nothing but their perturbations, in science nothing but its destructive applications, in art nothing but its sensualities, in monarchy nothing but its disputed successions, in law nothing but the transgressions that "come by the law." "But," it will be said, "compare England, not with Catholic, but with Protestant countries. Why should she suffer from disputation more than Denmark, Sweden, and Norway . . . nay, than Germany, the birthplace of the Reformation, a land singularly addicted to speculation, and even to theology; but in which the same ground is not gone over every year; in which theology means something besides controversy, and controversy itself can be carried on without social fermentation?"

The answer to this question is to be found in the fact that in Germany there exists, if little of orthodoxy, at least much of plain dealing in theology. The principle of authority being discarded, that of Private Judgment rules in its place. Erastianism has often,

indeed, interfered with it; and to the present day a theological sovereign of a constructive character, may amuse himself with piecing together two half Churches, and rearing one complete "Church of the Future." It is, however, a thing well understood that systems which do not rest upon ecclesiastical sanction can have little weight *in foro conscientiæ;* and a subscription merely external and negative has not reality enough about it to excite any profound feeling. Private Judgment, then, rules in Protestant Germany, and has ruled long enough to carry out its principles with consistency. Now, a Private Judgment which may deal as it likes with the meaning of the Bible, is, of course, entitled to deal equally freely with its text. Theology must therefore become, in the main, a question of Biblical Criticism, with which only the learned can meddle. A new science was thus substituted for doctrinal dispute, for which the most ignorant thought himself the most fitted. Those who retain most of orthodoxy hold Biblical Criticism in suspicion, and endeavour to stem the current. They strive in vain. Logic, which laughs at the reclamations of logic-haters, will have its way. To its iron sceptre a wide region has been committed in the world of thought, and a still larger one in that of action. Individuals may prove outlaws; but among races its laws are carried out with a certainty proportioned to the slowness of the process. It has proved so in this instance. If the individual has to form a creed for himself on the assumption that the Bible is his guide, he must have

an equal right to examine the character and claims of the Bible itself, and to compare that guide with others which also offer themselves to him. If this doctrine or that doctrine, this or that portion of Holy Scripture is to be rejected because it does not "*find*" the student "at the depths of his being," it will soon appear that there are many whose unenlightened moral sense is not "found" by the primary doctrines of Christianity, and to whom the books of prophets and apostles seem quite as apocryphal as the Deutero-canonical books. If the individual is to be the judge in these matters, the faculty in the individual which sits in the ultimate court of appeal, must be some natural faculty . . . the endowment or supposed endowment of the race . . . which has an insight into spiritual things, a commission to test revelation by innate intuitions, and authority to accept as much or as little of that revelation as it pleases, and thus to reproduce philosophy under the specious name of religion. In other words, Transcendentalism, or the philosophy of the pure Reason, must ever eventually substitute its Rational inspiration for the Supernatural inspiration of the Puritan, and must become the "dernière analyse" of Private Judgment. But Transcendentalism is of too aërial, as Biblical Criticism is of too dusty a character, to enkindle any very prolonged or ardent disputation. Where taste is practically the court of judgment, and caprice the arbiter, controversy finds rest in the adage, "de gustibus non est disputandum." Where Private Judgment is really,

as well as nominally, the rule, the field becomes too large to allow controversialists to grapple with each other. They have no common principles, standards, or even ideas; and their "views" become as incapable of being mutually compared as dreams are. Neither is there any reason why agreement should be sought for. Opinion has set up as a chartered libertine; and heresy and schism are things as impossible as violations of property are, among the races without civilisation.

Very different are the circumstances of England. The Reformation, which, on the Continent, was largely a popular revolt, in England took its rise in despotic sway and statecraft. Abroad, the infection began with the masses, and ascended to the higher classes. In England it began with a monarch, and descended through a scale of bribed and subservient nobles to a bewildered and deluded people. In England the schism was perfected before the heresy had begun. Before the slightest pretence had been made to investigate antiquity in search of a lost religion, the supreme doctrine of the organic unity of the Church had already been practically judged and condemned; and a national Church, the slave of a prince, himself the slave of his passions, had isolated itself and integrated itself, in defiance of Christian law. It could not otherwise have changed its theology without consultation with the Church Universal. The ancient Church and State of England found representatives in Cardinal Fisher, and

the noble-hearted Chancellor, More; through them protested, and with them died. The Church lorded over by Henry pretended to Orthodoxy; and in a convocation presided over by Cranmer—as solemn a one, assuredly, as any subsequently held—it re-affirmed the chief articles of the Catholic faith, and denounced the doctrines of the Protestants. In Edward's time Puritanism entered into it; in Elizabeth's time, a quasi-orthodoxy returned; and ever since the two spirits have wrestled in the same body. This is the reason for the state of things which England has witnessed. Anglican theology neither, like the Catholic teaching, flowed up higher and higher by the walls of the city of God, as denials of the Faith necessitated ampler and more defined confessions of it, nor, like the German neology dropped down with a "facilis descensus" towards the sea of unbelief. In the Anglican Church a creed and a set of articles were not either historic accidents or merely ornamental appendages: they were things which must, in theory at least, *be believed;* for that Church claimed to be a traditional and quasi-authoritative body; and they constituted its traditional teaching. In theory it remained dogmatic, but its dogmas refused to coalesce. The reason was this. At Elizabeth's accession far the larger part of the English people were Catholics, but the Protestants were the more ardent, and they supported her, not Mary of Scotland. The Church made by Elizabeth was intended to include both parties, and this could

only be effected through formularies which admitted opposite interpretations, and therefore generated endless disputes.

Private Judgment in some form, disguised or undisguised, must ever, of course, be the alternative where the opposite Rule of Faith is not *unequivocally* maintained; but, nothwithstanding, the Anglican Church never fully and frankly committed itself to that rule of Faith. The consequence is, that disputes in her communion are not at once cut short by the obvious absurdity of forcing persons to think alike who, with the same Scriptures and the same rule of interpretation, insist on making different inferences from them. English clergymen were to teach exclusively what is in Holy Scripture; but they were also to teach only what had actually been found in Scripture by the ancient bishops and fathers! The creeds were to be recognised as an authentic summary of Divine truths, and as such were authoritative; but on the other hand, this eminence was only accorded to them because their statements can be proved by "the sure warrant of Scripture!" But proved *in whose estimation?* Who is competent to compare the creeds with Holy Scripture? The individual? Then Private Judgment sits in the last court of appeal, and has an equal right to accept old creeds, or to construct new ones. The Anglican Church? But she admits that she is but part of the Church, and a part at variance with other parts, as well as with most Protestant bodies. Such a claim

on her part, then, is at once to repudiate all special title to *divine* guidance, and yet to require on the part of Englishmen a submission to an authoritative teaching, which is thus confessedly no more than the traditions of *men*. Such was the Church made by a queen whose sympathies were chiefly with the Catholics at first, but whose interests grew more and more identified with Protestant aid. It was not one to suit either the Puritans of the 16th century, or the far wiser and better Anglicans of the 17th. The dispute lasts still.

Why is it that what seems so simple is yet so often misunderstood? It happens thus partly because many like ingenuities better than what is simple, and because many more think it meritorious to ignore what it is distressing to recollect.

Those who thus shut their eyes to the painful part of the historic picture deal equally delusively with the portion on which they fix their eyes. They explore the history of the last three centuries, collect together everything that is beautiful, striking, or picturesque; and out of the spoils of scattered years compose a whole, which to their fancy is ever present. Hooker is always their type of the recluse scholar, but in his own day he was hated by the Puritans. Their bishop is always kneeling in his oratory and bedewing Greek devotions with the tears of Andrews. An ever present Wilson is in prison for reviving the discipline of his diocese; and an expected Laud is ever waiting for the martyr's crown. If they seldom think of the

priests who for centuries together said Mass in holes and corners, on rainy moors, or behind the sliding panels of old manor-houses, they never forget the Anglican clergy, who, during the storm of Puritan ascendency, were faithful to the Book of Common Prayer :—for them each hamlet is skirted by a "golden grove," in which a Taylor responds to St. Francis de Sales, or echoes his song ;—for them the whole Anglican Church is scented by the carnations and musk-roses that grew in the garden of Herbert. Against a view on both sides alike so partial, one must protest, because in religion, which is the Kingdom of Truth, delusions, if self-willed, are fatal, and never more fatal than when a devotion that errs from its right object converts itself into an illicit affection and a perpetual bondage. To surrender freedom of thought without gaining a guidance that can be, or claims to be Divine, is as if a man, proud of domesticity, were to go up to a room at the top of his house, lock the door, and throw the key out of the window. Such is the effect of reasoning with the affections or imagination, and thus serving a human master in sacred things. The best of England's seventeenth century divines strove to undo much of what the preceding century had done, especially Laud. He, and many of those able men, would have died with Fisher and More. Later the Non-jurors stood by their principles, civil and religious, and surrendered their endowments. They would not have proved servile to Henry or Elizabeth. They would have been confessors or martyrs for their principles.

In Anglican theology the names of great principles have been retained, and have served as watchwords in battle; but those principles have either not existed in that purity which is their life, or have been so confused by contradictory principles, that to work them out has ever been the old story of Penelope's web. First one school runs ahead; as a necessary consequence a reaction takes place, and the opposite school has the advantage. Exhausted, they lie down to sleep side by side; and when they waken, the same battle re-commences with the same results. "How is it, theological students ask, "that the Church of England, with all its learned men, never produces a systematic body of divinity?" Because, it must be answered, the longer it thinks, the more impossible does it find it to ascertain what it holds, and what it does not hold. It is full of forces; but forces without law make chaos. The greater its energies the greater its confusions; for there is in it no centripetal power to modulate its movements. Let us take it at its best. The sixteenth century was the period of scandals, when doctrines, no two years the same, received their only significant comment from the falling roofs of abbeys and the violated shrines of cathedrals. Let it pass. The eighteenth century was the torpidity of death, and the peace of the grave. Let it too be forgotten. But the seventeenth century was something better. The period of convulsion had passed; the conservative tendencies, so deeply rooted in England, had had time to re-assert themselves; and the

period of restoration had begun. There was peace again in the universities; and old halls and libraries and chapels were forced into the service of the new learning. The court was High Church. Every effort was made to give the experiment fair play; and men in far lands waited to see whether a paper Church could work like one of flesh and blood. What did it produce? A literature. What did it bequeath? A revolution. The Restoration took place. The wheel had gone round. Conscientious Puritans gave up their livings, and conscientious Episcopalians reaped the just reward of tried fidelity. Men of virtue again occupied the pulpits, and men of learning the chairs of the universities and the episcopal thrones. The learning of the time was nothing narrow, technical, or professional; the clergy were patriots and men of honour, as well as devout men; the nation was tired of its recent madness, and disposed to accept with gratitude any credible creed that could be proposed to it. What was the end? The work of a vicious court, and the reaction after a Puritanism gone mad. Corruption of morals, Latitudinarianism, and infidelity. Very able books had been written, and that was all. The best English eloquence took its rise in the form of sermons; the best English philosophy appeared in the volumes of Cudworth, More, and the Platonic divines; beautiful religious poetry accompanied it. All the adjuncts and ornaments of theology were there in abundance. Theology alone was absent. Its substance had been

annihilated; the *species* alone remained. And why? Because the substance of Theology is truth; and truth cannot maintain itself except in its fulness and its purity; and these cannot exist apart from principles at once scientific and simple, a consistent *method* of reasoning, and a sure basis for faith. That full-faced Truth which looked down for centuries on the land, had averted its sacred face; and the sad prophet had but watched from a cleft in the rock the skirts of a departing Divinity.

It can hardly indeed have escaped the observation of the most vehement admirers of the Anglican divines of the seventeenth century that they had a weak side as well as a strong side. They were strong against dissenters, at least against the later dissenters . . . strong, not when they met them on Ecclesiastical grounds (for having inherited a position which virtually denied the *organic* unity of the Church, they lacked the key-stone of the Ecclesiastical Argument), but when they assailed their splenetic denials with authorities from antiquity. They were strong in moral declamation; expert in controversial fence; and in their devotional works there is occasionally a depth and tenderness which bear to the writings of the saints an analogy like that of an engraving to a picture, and which profoundly impress all who know not how deeply they are indebted for their writings on such subjects to the stores of the Catholic Church which they assailed. In the meantime the weak side of the more learned Anglican divines was

their controversy with Rome. On that field the "giants" suddenly became pigmies, and scholars sometimes degenerated into railers. They made up, each for himself, a lawyer's plea in defence of the Anglican Isolation: but no one agreed with his neighbour's "view" on this momentous subject. In proportion as the pleader was learned and aspired after orthodoxy, his statements on the subject of the Church were such as, in the estimate of the more Protestant part of the community, let in the end of the Roman wedge, and admitted premises, the conclusions legitimately drawn from which must have proved as fatal to Reformers who discarded the whole Church of the sixteenth century, as to dissenters who abandoned the Anglican State-Church of the seventeenth century. Witness as strongly as they might against the Mother of Souls, yet the "witnesses agreed not in their testimony." One boldly affirmed that they had left the Western Church because, for "eight hundred years and more," it had been "drowned in idolatry, the sin of all others most hateful to God," . . . a charge which of course extended itself equally to the Eastern Christianity. A second shrank from such an assertion, as implying that God had forsaken His Church during the longer period of its existence, and as leading necessarily to the conclusion that if the whole Church had been allowed to remain in error for eight hundred years, so a separated and minute portion of it might also, while endeavouring to reform itself, fall into

[1] See the "Book of Homilies."

error and remain in blindness. His statement was a more moderate one, asserting that the "Anglican Church" had left that of Rome because the Papal pretentions substituted a human for a divine Head of the Church. A third maintained that "we had never separated" but had simply been excommunicated and cast out, because, though we did not dispute the Primacy of St. Peter's See, we could not submit to the exaggerated claims of later Popes, and the exactions of the "*Court* of Rome." A fourth was in favour of the absolute authority inherent in each distinct National Church; and therefore branded dissenters as schismatics, while the State persecuted them as such: but he could find no reason why the Church in France or Spain did not possess an equal privilege. A fifth believed in authority; but in an authority which, far from being a check on Private Judgment, hopelessly extended its sphere. Do not bind yourself, he said, by the definitions of any living Church; for, as many Churches have fallen, so each in turn may fall; and since even "a General Council may err," much more may the articles of a special community. Go then to the Fathers, and interpret Holy Scripture by the unanimous voice of antiquity as your safest guide. But the misfortune was that antiquity refused to present its verdict in this compendious form; that Rome, the Greek Communities, and every Protestant body, claimed "the earliest and purest antiquity" as on their side; and that it was more difficult for the ignorant to master

a hundred books than one only. A sixth, and the most clear-sighted of all, though one who did not belong to the High Church school, threw himself on a principle which was at least intelligible and consistent, and said, "I affirm Private Judgment pure and simple, and the 'Bible the Religion of Protestants.' In fundamental points it is plain enough, and every man of good will shall have the teaching of the Spirit." But it is not possible for man to force "a new constitution" on God who has already given us His Covenant with His Conditions. The most precious of books continued to be the obscurest in spite of bravura phrases and bold assumptions . . . and that even because it is the most precious. Those who were loudest about fundamentals, could never decide either what doctrines were and were not fundamental, or what was the true meaning of those admitted by all to be among the fundamental. The most different opinions respecting matters affirmed to be "fundamental" were vehemently urged by men all praying for Divine illumination, and believing themselves to be men of good will—one man rejecting the Papal Unity, another the Visible Church, a third five of the Sacraments, another all the seven, another the Trinity, and at last, in Germany, the Bible itself as an Inspired Document. In a word, it turned out that the facts would not accommodate themselves to the theory; that it was a questionable compliment to the Bible to affirm that it was so shallow a stream that every one could wade across it; that as little do

we honour the Holy Spirit by saying that any one who chooses to isolate himself from the Communion of the Brethren has only to pray for grace and rise up a Prophet; that the Bible becomes intelligible only through that Spirit Who inspired it; that that Spirit is given as an illuminating power to the Church alone; and that to the Individual He communicates Himself as a sacred influence in the heart only so long as the individual keeps the "Unity of the Spirit" by abiding in that "one Body" which is the Temple of the Spirit, and which we are therefore commanded to "hear."

Not only did the writers of the seventeenth century differ from each other on all those cardinal points the moment they engaged in the Catholic Controversy, but each differed as much from himself as from his neighbour: and many opposed opinions can be justified by citations from different works of the same author. Let us take but a single instance. Dr. Barrow's celebrated work on the Pope's Supremacy may be regarded as a summary of all that had preceded it on that subject, being also the ablest of all. What does it consist of? Numbers of legal *points*, cleverly, but captiously put against the Catholic Theory of the Church, each of them inconsistent with its neighbour. Now, the argument is, that St. Peter had no superiority over his brother Apostles, St. Paul even reproving him to his face; now, that his primacy was special to him, and was not inherited by his successors in the Roman See; now, that the Headship of the Church is Christ's

only; now, that the Popes might be borne with but for their exorbitances; now that St. Peter never was Bishop of Rome. But how does Dr. Barrow *map out* the question, and reply to the Catholic argument? First, he assumes, as the true delineation of the Church, her character and her claims, the statements on those subjects made by a single one of her schools, the Ultramontane. Next he separates each citation from the Fathers bearing on these subjects from the rest; ignoring the cumulative force of all taken collectively; reducing the meaning of each to the least that it may possibly bear; and then flinging each aside as irrelevant, because the *whole* of the Catholic System cannot be established by each separate *part* of the evidence adduced in its support. Lastly, he gleans in the wide field of Catholic history for scandals which can have no place in the discussion, except a rhetorical one; those scandals, whether true or false, relating chiefly to individuals, for whom Catholic principles claim, as such, no infallibility. And in the meantime what is the theory of the Church and its divine organisation which this great writer puts forward in opposition to the Catholic? No one can discover it. He has no theory because he has a hundred. This circumstance made it impossible for his work to have a permanent value as a consistent theological, or even philosophical statement. As an armoury against Rome, it is resorted to equally by High Churchmen, Establishmentarians, Evangelicals, Latitudinarians, and

Dissenters. This is the consequence of writing a book bristling with points and abounding in talent, but wholly destitute, not only of a definite system, but even of a fundamental idea.

What was the systematic doctrine of the "great divines of the seventeenth century" on the Church? *Simply they had none.* It was impossible for them to have any, because their unhappy task was to reconcile formularies, many of them Catholic, with a standing ground and history exclusively Protestant since the storm of Edward the Sixth's day and the dexterous reconstruction of Queen Elizabeth's. To have decided in favour of the "Invisible Church" would have discarded "Church principles," rendered all obedience impossible, and accelerated the process of dissolution and separation. To have defined the matter theologically in favour of national Churches would have justified every Church in Europe, and none in Asia. To have asserted, as modern High Churchmen do, the *necessity* of Episcopacy and the Apostolic Succession, would have unchurched almost all Protestant communities except the English.

Was their theology, then, *Latitudinarian?* By no means. A Latitudinarian theory can be accepted only by Latitudinarians; and the Anglican Church was obliged to include, equally, not Latitudinarians, who did not then exist, but Puritans, and half-Catholics. Its system, therefore, could only be that of practical Latitudinarianism, with the semblance of a theoretical exclusiveness. There is an infinite

difference between *Comprehensiveness* and *Equivocation*. The former endeavours to include many individuals within the same community by means of reducing to a minimum the number of doctrines assent to which is required. The latter effects the same object by means of an interpretation at once *ambiguous* and *exclusive*. The former is Latitudinarianism; the latter is Mystification. The former gains its object by making professedly few *definitions*: the latter by allowing a loophole for countless *interpretations*. The ambiguity characterising the Anglican Rule of Faith, developed, as Anglican theology was forced into form, into a system of Equivocation disguised as Comprehensiveness. Puritans are exclusive; "Popery," according to them, is idolatry, and the sacramental system is "Popery" in disguise. Real High Church doctrine is exclusive; it counts the sacraments among the things essential; and it stigmatises as heresy a departure from primitive definitions, and as schism a departure from the visible Church. Now, these exclusive systems are mutually opposed; and neither could find its place in a system that professed to be Latitudinarian, and left disputed points undefined. How then were the two parties held together in the Elizabethan days? By means of equivocal formularies, made double, like doors so constructed that they may be pushed open either to right or left, while, the moment one has entered, they fall back of themselves and cannot be pushed open. The whole system, the result of compromises made

more than once, bore the same character. It had its "verily and indeed present" for the High Churchman, and its "feed on Him *by faith*" for the Puritan, yet each party asserted, and was forced by its principles to assert, not that its view was one of several views all alike permitted, and none exclusively sanctioned; but that its view was the doctrine of the Anglican Church as well as of the Bible; that no other was sanctioned by either; and that its adversary held his place, not by the liberality of the Church (for it never can be true charity to palter with essential truths), but through his own insincerity or perverseness, through relaxation of discipline, or through some unhappy accident of the time, to be mended as soon as possible. The same system of equivocation applied to countless doctrines, but especially to that which relates to the Church. Opposites were to be comprehended; but no one was to admit the principle of Latitude. Private judgment was to be asserted by one, and Church authority by another; and as these contradictories can meet in no middle term (since a man must either be guided by the judgment of his Church, or sit in judgment over her, whatever relation he may claim with antiquity), each was to be allowed to assert that the other was a heretic in disguise; and all was well so long as both remained practically and passively obedient to the royal will. Submission was the thing necessary; not a recognition of the duty of submission; acquiescence was required, not belief. Political necessity, let us

hope, rather than conscious insincerity, may have been the cause of this method of proceeding; but the consequences were not therefore modified. The bond of the whole was evasion, not charity; the essence of the whole was equivocation, not toleration; the result of the whole was confusion, not congruity or the household union of the Church.

As time went by the difficulty was the same, and was met in the same way, viz., by evasion. Two centuries ago the Puritans might still exist on hope. The Reformation had lived but for a century or so, and it had done work, which was one not of construction, but destruction. Puritanism waited, knowing that that "two-handed axe" waited also. It "placed its trust in Providence, and kept its powder dry." And the High Church party also could afford to wait, and to hope. Learning had again begun to re-assert itself; and the homeliness of Latimer, and the scurrilities of Bale, and the duplicities of Cranmer, and the devastations of the first Cromwell and his master — all these things were beginning "to take a sober colouring" from the weather-stains of time, and to look more picturesque than scandalous, when contemplated from a distance by the more learned schools and polished courts of James or Charles. No monarch who intended to "unfrock a proud prelate" would have mentioned the circumstance to him publicly at a chance rencontre on a bridge, or boasted aloud in Court that he "tuned all the pulpits in England." Catholicism had not then recovered

about half the territory she had lost at the first burst of the revolt: neither had she completed those vast conquests of the faith in new regions, which, as Lord Macaulay asserted, more than compensated her losses in Europe. In Germany the true character of the revolt had not had time to declare itself. The rejection of the ecclesiastical principle had not yet been followed by the rejection of the dogmatic, still less of faith in the Bible. It was still just possible to fancy that if German Protestants "had not bishops, it was because they could not have them." In England also the problem had not yet been worked out. The question, How do a few dioceses at the north of the channel constitute a distinct and complete Church, any more than an equal number of dioceses taken from both sides of the water?—where is the principle of unity?—and why may not any two or three English bishops dissent from the rest, just as these dissented from the great body of Christendom?—Such questions were in a large measure forestalled by a certain theory of monarchical power and the divine right of kings, which enabled an ardent loyalty and an erring imagination to find in the kingly office a pseudo-centre for a miniature Church. The Hebrew monarchy was arbitrarily taken as a type of the Christian, and the king in his relations with the Church was otherwise regarded than would then have been a House of Commons including Jews and avowed Atheists, and yet occupying practically the same position. That idea of monarchy gave unity

to the nation, and the nation gave it to the Church. The height of the pillar imparted a majesty to the statue to which it served as pedestal.

But time, like fire, tries every man's work what it is, and God's judgment, like frost, searches out and splits up the strongest things the strength of which is not divine. The fair and majestic disguise fell off by degrees, and a Church, endowed indeed with the wealth of the State, but covered no longer with the garment of a royalty not its own, was gradually reduced to make its cause good on ecclesiastical grounds, or not at all. Reality dispelled the dream. The Revolution of 1688 came; and the theory of the divine right of kings could maintain itself no more in England. Episcopacy in Scotland was discarded by the State. From that moment the Anglican Church became, by the confession of State and Crown, not the Church of the nation, but of a part of the nation, and the *unity of a nation* no longer supplied the place of ecclesiastical unity. The change went on. Convocation, the great council of the national Church, and its sole organ for corporate and free action, was abolished. It could then no longer be maintained, as it was in Hooker's time, that the king was head of the Church, not as being head of the State, but as being the head of the nation, and as governing that nation alike in its civil and spiritual relations—in the one relation ruling through Parliament, in the other through convocation. It became evident that it was as head of the State that he

ruled; and therefore that the Church was subject to the State.

The High Churchmen of the present day cannot then justly consider themselves as fighting the same battle for their principles as was fought by the eminent men of old, for all who held those principles in the time of the Stuarts maintained them under circumstances essentially different from ours in the present time; and after the Revolution the strongest asserters of High Church principles, viz., the Non-jurors, were no longer to be found in the Established Church.

But that is not all. "High Church" principles are not the same as they were either of old, or at the great revival of them in the present century. They now include that of "Latitude," which at least in theory was denied of old, when strict though equivocal definitions were protected by severe penal laws which punished all who denied them.

At the beginning of the High Church revival authority had a substantive meaning. It meant the authority of the existing Church of England. That appeal has been practically answered, as far as a church without representation can answer it, by the fact that the chief dignitaries of the Church, the chief tribunal to which it is subject, and the majority of the nation have declared themselves against the appellants. With circumstances, the meaning of the word authority has changed. It now means at most but the authority of antiquity—that is, of antiquity as

interpreted by the individual or by the school. The principle of "private judgment," thus expelled from the front door, has but made its rounds and come in again by the back door, and under a new name.

Again, one of the most important principles of High Church theology, as Cardinal Newman has remarked, was its bold appeal to external evidence. It turned in manly scorn from that feeble and effeminate habit of appealing to mere internal feelings, which belongs to dissenting bodies. It said, The standard by which you measure truth and falsehood, like that by which you measure right and wrong, must be external to you and above you, as God is: otherwise, it is but your own reflection. Leave it to the Puritans to keep up the temperature of their souls by intoxicating draughts of delusive confidence. Your standard must be external, objective, immutable—the creeds of the Church, the definitions of councils, the "Written Word," not the "inner word" *only*, the Written Word as interpreted by the consensus of ages and nations, not by the vagaries of individual fancy—the Church as recognised by the notes and marks set upon her by her Maker, not by the accidents of place or time, the sanction of kings, the learning and piety of teachers, the experiences of individuals. Such were the principles of the High Church theology; but circumstances gradually arose which made it impossible that such principles should witness in favour of the Church of England, and then they were imperceptibly changed for their

opposites. Judged by an external standard it became every day more and more difficult to show how a separated community possessed, in its completeness, any one of the "notes" which characterise the Church confessed in the Nicene Creed. What arguments, then, have been substituted for these in her defence?

The first of them is a purely subjective one, dependent on individual interpretations of passing and transient events;—that which is called the "signs of life." The candlestick cannot be removed because the Church of England still lives; and the tokens of this life are to be found in the spread of High Church principles. That success is, however, accounted for in a dozen different ways by the different schools, religious and irreligious, among us. The Tractarian, the Evangelical, the Philosopher, the Statesman, the Catholic—each has his view of it, and draws from it an inference very different from his neighbour's. Is it not obvious that that inference depends exclusively on the *point of view* from which the progress is regarded, and the previous religious bias of those who muse on the phenomenon? What the success of Tractarianism proves to the Evangelicals is the power of a thick delusion;—the strength of our carnal nature, ever rejoicing in fleshly bonds;—the inadequacy of a Reformation which did but half its work;—the might of Anti-Christ, and the subtlety of that Babylonian sorceress who, when expelled from a house once more made pure, contrived, as Milton

complained, to leave behind her, in rubric and ritual, tokens and memorials, gewgaws and "love-gifts capable of stirring up the embers of old affection." And to the Latitudinarian what does the success of Tractarianism prove? That man can never rise above his littleness;—that he must needs cramp his mind, as Chinese women cramp their feet, lest it should make any real progress;—that some narrow system, Popish, Puritan, or Puseyite, must ever be the prison of one too ingenious, too bigoted, too cowardly to be free. And to the infidel what does it prove? That as long as men believe in Revelation at all, an irresistible logic will ever bring them back to the superstitions they had left behind;—that those who insist on receiving the Bible as an inspired and infallible guide must in consistency find, or fashion to themselves, a Church equally infallible in order to make their guide available;—that a half freedom is as futile a thing as a half faith is in the estimate of theology;—that man can only be free from dogmatism and priestcraft when he shakes off those old world fancies or traditions about a Divine Revelation as so much poetry gone astray;—that he should read the Bible as he reads the Iliad, discard the supernatural, recognise his own small place in the infinite system of nature, do bravely his day's work in the day, and fling aside speculation as he flung aside his corals. And to the Erastian statesman what does it prove? That the clergy will ever be the same when they can;—that they will always be

embroiling the State with education disputes at home, or ecclesiastical aggression from abroad;—that if indulged in a surplice, they will try to turn it into an alb; if allowed a clerk's reading desk they will metamorphose it into a confessional;—that they want to have their whisper in every court, and their foot on every floor;—that out of the restless speculations of a busy idleness they will ever be spinning cobwebs to catch flies;—that the only chance of keeping the clergy human is to make them rich;—that if you would prevent bishops from becoming Pontiffs, you must keep them in the House of Lords and on the platforms.

And the Catholic—how will he interpret the success of Tractarianism? After a very old-fashioned manner. He will say, "God taught you as He teaches all who will learn. Make the most of what you have, and what you lack shall be supplied to you. His mercy abated the work of destruction. The monasteries were pulled down; but the cathedrals remained. They preached of permanence and of restoration. Your Prayer-Book contained good and holy things, like other books of extracts. As you pondered its deeper meaning, you sought a comment *in the context;* then the Missal and Breviary poured forth their abundant rivers into those narrower channels, and beckoned the world-weary to the 'forest of their Carmel.' Great but merciful judgments taught you to 'put not your trust in princes.' You learned your lesson. You lifted up your eyes to the hills, whence

cometh salvation, and taught that Apostolicity, not the sanction of the State, is the badge of the Church. To him that had was given; and how many have already been led by the doctrine of the Apostolic Succession to the Apostolic See—the golden clasp which holds the episcopal girdle together, and binds it round the Church! Creeds taught you that it was necessary to believe dogmas in their true meaning. Your Church told you that she knew not that meaning; but you persevered. You had the major and the minor premiss:—you drew the conclusion. How many, after their submission, have acknowledged in glad humility that till then they had never understood the Communion of Saints, the Incarnation, the Trinity—nay, that till they were Catholics, they knew but half what it is to be a Theist! You began by believing that, as God is the Truth, so Christianity must be dogmatic: ere long you learned that all dogmas are but parts or manifestations of that one stupendous Verity which lives ever, through the Holy Spirit, in the heart of the Church; which is defined as man's need requires, and as God's Providence permits; and of which one must explicitly or implicitly possess the whole, or possess no part except in shadow. Your tradition about fundamental truths accordingly fell off from you, like a chrysalis; and you learned that all Revealed Truth is essential, and that each person must be in a condition to confess all parts of it with equal certainty. You rode on; and your right hand taught you.

And the indifferentist philosopher—what will be his "view" of the matter? He will say, "Man's mind is a pendulum, ever swinging backward and forward between extreme points. As Methodism was a reaction from the secularity of the preceding century, so 'Tractarianism' was a reaction from State influence. Adversity makes a man acquainted with strange bed-fellows. A government which had suppressed ten Irish bishops made the Church party acquainted with its principles. They preached the Apostolic Succession. That principle was a theological one. It carried them as far as the British channel. They saw that the 'Church militant' could not be a 'geographical expression;' they broke bounds, and attached themselves to the 'Orbis Terrarum.' What has happened was natural.

"This will easily be seen. The direction in which the tree bends is that in which it will fall. Other Churches were either Popish or Puritan; and the misfortune of the Eastern Church is that it is Popish, while political circumstances have always prevented it from *growing* a Pope. But in the Church of England two aspirations were included, one of them attached to liberty, and the other to the venerable—the Traditional—as in the English language two vocabularies, the Latin and German, are united. These two struggled together, and each had the advantage in turn. A new scene opened out. The disabilities under which both Dissenters and Catholics laboured were done away with; and in 1829 the true trial of

the Church of England *began*, for she was then first bidden to walk alone. The success of either of the contending parties in the Church of England must necessarily have stimulated the opposite to redoubled energy at a moment when it must do or die. Protestantism had gained the ascendancy in the modern public opinion. The whole traditional element in English theology was called on to speak at once, or be silent for ever. It made a brave response. Whenever the Church of England breaks up it will be because the last question has met a plain answer, and thus given one of the schools that compose it a final triumph over its rival. That success must itself be the result of a fierce battle, in which the conquered party will put forth the utmost of its energy, and attain, for a moment, to its highest development."

There is, of course, no reason why the High Churchman should assume the Catholic or the indifferentist reading of recent events to be the true one rather than any of the rival versions of them. What he is really called on to do is to recognise the obvious fact that all such views are relative to the critic's "point of view," and that as such they are endless. Alas, they are also in one sense *irrefutable* —a very different thing from being true, or a substitute for truth.

No confutation can convince those who do not reason with an entire probity and a perfect "good will." In the temporal sphere, those who live in an infected neighbourhood, sail in a bad ship, or

ride a foundered horse, receive a confutation which suffices for others. But in spiritual things, the only light which cannot be resisted belongs to the future world; and a silence more awful than any sound compasses the deeds of men till the judgment is pronounced. From a period earlier than that in which we learn to speak, till the last sob of expiring life, inclusively, we are allowed the awful power of deceiving ourselves and those about us. And thus we are brought back to our starting-point. "Who shall stay the Plague of Controversy?" This is the question which the hater of theology, and not he alone, has been demanding for years. Why should he add to the warfare of the time by warring against the search after truth itself? The world was not made exclusively for lovers of literary ease "or practical life," for persons without anxieties, or whose anxieties are limited to trivial matters, and reach not those which are eternal. A great disquietude respecting Divine Truth must ever remain in a nation which has once enjoyed the full light of Revealed Religion; the chalice may be shattered, but the fragrance remains still on the fragments. The Catholic Church is the Temple of that Spirit through whom the Bible was written. It is for this reason that she is also emphatically the "Church of the Poor," to whom "the Gospel is preached." In her fold, it is no inconsistency to affirm at once that you live by the truth, and yet that you are no discoverer of truth; for to her children truth comes first by

inheritance, and commonly through faith and obedience alone, not discussion. The last remains a task belonging more especially to her doctors and pastors. In the "One Body" all members have not the same function: for if the eye were all, where would be the ear?—but all have the *benefit* of all functions; for the same Spirit dispenses to all, constituting some Teachers, and others the Taught. It is thus that among civilised, though not among barbarous races, there is a distribution of offices; and though but a few are lawyers or soldiers, all have the benefits of law, and all partake in the national security. From the moment, however, that Private Judgment substituted itself for that authority which is, in reality, the Law of Love and the Communion of Saints, the pre-eminence which rules by serving, no choice remained for the world except that of renouncing truth, which is to renounce Him who is Truth, or that of seeking truth in part through controversy, and *at all costs*. The Eastern Schism only paralysed the region detached from the Church in which is the Spirit of life. The Reformation blew a trumpet against the four points of heaven, and invoked at once all the storms. They heard it and rushed in. It found a state of things in which what is individual and what is common in religion could not be confused. Each man had to believe, to hope, to love, to repent, to obey individually; but truth was objectively a common possession like the air we breathe. Personal action and personal responsibility could not

then have been confounded with separate action and a self chosen isolation. A *common* confession of sins and a *private* creed would not then have satisfied. In the so-called "dark ages," not a century passed by without adding to the stores of theology; but the work went on ordinarily in silence, like the building of the Temple. Since the Reformation, the sum of recognised revealed truth has ever been diminishing. It is surely not the lower instincts of man's nature which make him cling convulsively to what is left. It implies a surviving nobleness of heart.

In England the controversy rages more fiercely than elsewhere; and this is her own choice. She has enthroned private judgment, but not expelled tradition. It is where the water meets the land that the waves roar loudest. She has all the controversies that other Protestant countries have, and one more besides—the question, namely, whether she is Protestant or not. Surely there must be a remedy for these confusions. If "High" and "Low" cannot live together, why cannot they live apart, and be at rest? "But," it will be answered, "the two divided portions would soon have to be divided again. Moreover, the true destiny of the Church of England is not to expel but to include!" Very possibly; and nothing can be easier. What more would be necessary for that end than to cut off those "subtleties" or dogmatic statements which offend the men of peace—retain the three primitive creeds, but discard the Thirty-nine Articles? Do not try to unite contradictory advantages. You have your

Church: you are not responsible for it. It was not made by you. It has a fatal fault. It has also merits. It is a great bond of social and political order, a great educationist, a great dispenser of charities, a vindicator of morals and ethics, a brave witness for "general Christianity." Many of its most zealous supporters do not assert more than this; and all this many Catholics concede. It is not because they deny that in this sense the Establishment is a valuable institution that they decline to belong to it; but because they believe in a Supernatural Order, founded on a Supernatural Revelation. Why not discuss that high claim? Protestants say that discussion is the mode to reach truth; do not then be angry because the nation takes to discussion, and prefers "vitality" to "stagnation." Catholics fully admit that where spiritual unity has been unhappily lost, the best compensation for that loss is to be found in the animation generated by friendly discussion and a generous emulation. Why give these things a bad name? If "the Church has authority in controversies of faith," do not be surprised if Churchmen preach authority; and if all Churches "may err," do not be surprised if the laity often hesitate to believe in an instructress who cannot believe in herself. Least of all be offended because a certain Church which is greatly spoken against, but which believes that she has a gift for man, proffers that gift.

Such would be the counsel of plain common sense to one resolved to perpetuate all the causes of strife

that now so strangely meet in England, yet displeased because the connection between cause and effect has not been suspended to ensure his rest. But very different would be a Catholic's tone to one of a more serious mind, whose sorrow comes from a deeper source. Let such a man but ruminate over the actual state of things, and do so in that frame of mind in which we realise the thought that the whole world of sense and earthly interest is but a dream; that truth alone abides; that God is the true universe; and that suns and systems are but motes in His light. Let him ask himself, "And I, what is my faith? Do I really *believe* anything? What is the theology of the day, and how was my own come by?" Might not the answer be often thus made—"A little part of it, but the better part, came, on the Catholic principle, by tradition. It was learned at the knee of a mother. A little more came from the teaching prevalent at the moment in the school to which I was sent as a boy. Another portion came from the suggestion of friends who have long since changed their minds. Another portion from teachers selected by fancy. Another from books at variance with each other, and among which we were at once pupils and umpires. Another from private judgment pure. Another from the accidents of the hour. Another from vague impression and predilection. Another from a resolution always to avoid Rome; and the greater part from Public Opinion—a blind guide, perhaps, but one that is always close by one."

If this be so, you think many things, but you *believe* nothing; and you suspect it. Your theology cannot come from Him who is eternal Order, and immutable Truth. This also you know, as far as you choose to know it. In this, then, lies your probation.

For a choice lies before you. You may be true to the moral light you have; pray for more; fulfil known duties with diligence; use the internal grace denied to none, and likewise the external aids from men, books, or events, which Providence places in our way in proportion as we will use them. You believe in reason and conscience. You may then cast off whatever in human systems is plainly not above reason, but contradictory to it, and incoherent. You probably think that a Revelation has been made, and that, whatever it may be, faith is the organ through which it is received. You may exchange a rule of faith through which the habitual and full exercise of faith, even if the disposition exists, is hardly possible, for one in which faith is directed by her who is the "pillar and the ground of truth" to the spiritual objects of faith. You know that certainty, not probability, ranks among the scriptural "notes" of true religious knowledge. You may seriously examine the claims of a Church which has always insisted on the certainty of Divine knowledge, and denounced modern systems as conjectural. You may make the Cross your book;—fear God so as to fear none beside;—love Him, so as to be undistracted by meaner affections;—have Him for your guide, and

find in Him not only the Truth and the Life, but the way to each, and to endless peace. Except through Him no one can come to His Church.

Or, again, you may trample your misgivings down. You may find out the most plausible reasons for remaining as you are, such as the necessity of fulfilling immediate duties, the danger of speculation leading to delusion, the chance of inquiry depriving you of faith—a faith which too probably you cannot retain, except by trading with it in the spirit of a reverent boldness. You may do all this, and be thought the better of by the world for so doing; and feel less and less disquietude every year. But you will have betrayed yourself. A sorrier sight there cannot be, whatever the world may think, than that of a brave man acting like a coward, an earnest man like a trifler, a lover of truth and right like one who believes that, in their highest and native sphere, truth and right have been accorded no secure place on this earth. Yet even to this men born for better things are reduced by the imaginary necessity of submitting themselves to a state of things created for them three centuries ago by men immeasurably inferior to themselves, men who cheated them of those great primary ideas, Religion, Faith, and absolute Truth, which *underlie* theology; and the human substitutes for which, though they continue to bear those august names, are too unsubstantial to serve as the basis for any solid structure.

To many persons this language will seem too

strong, though they use stronger in denouncing both Catholic doctrines and also the "Plague of Controversy." Among such writers are many excellent persons, and these will hardly deny that to this question there is another side, nay, that theological inquiry may be a duty, and bring a blessing. It is plainly the duty of one who knows that God has given to man a Revelation of Himself, and that of that Revelation there exist many contradictory versions, to make most earnest inquiry as to which of these versions is the authentic one. Some persons are debarred from such an inquiry by the fear that they are unequal to the task. Such humility deserves our reverence and sympathy: yet is not this to forget that, in all cases, it is the honest endeavour, far the more honest if it costs us much, and not a visible success, which is needful. God requires the impossible of none, and a partial ignorance of the truth, if one which is involuntary, involves no responsibility. Honest inquiry is commonly the test as to whether we desire to serve God in God's way, or only in our own way, the question of questions; and if nothing be added to the inquirer's knowledge, he may notwithstanding earn a great reward in a higher grace enabling him to use better than before the knowledge already possessed. "Controversy" has become a "plague" only because its warfare is seldom an honourable warfare, and is often waged with poisoned weapons, such as persecutions, whether political or social, imputations of bad motives, or the countless

tricks of a dishonest rhetoric. It may also be conducted with humility, with justice, with charity (a great clearer of dim vision), and with entire mutual respect; and it often is so conducted.

Another hindrance to inquiry is a false patriotism or a false loyalty. A true patriotism and a true loyalty consist not in shutting our eyes to our country's demerits or dangers, but in opening them wide, thinking freely, and speaking frankly. It is our duty to repel with indignation any claim to our allegiance set up, not on behalf of our country, but of a single generation, one which lived its life and went to its judgment three centuries ago, and which initiated its revolt by an affirmation, in its Book of Homilies, already referred to, that the whole Church, in the East and in the West, had lain drowned in idolatry for nine centuries and more—a statement directly at variance with our Divine Lord's promise that the Gates of Hell should never prevail against her. These men "protested." Have their descendants no right to protest against the calumny? Have they not a right to inquire whether princes, who in less than forty years had completed a Spiritual Revolution which may hereafter be termed "the Mother of all the Revolutions," have indeed proved the benefactors of their country, even in matters political and social; and again, whether, in spiritual things, we should not have gained far more than the sixteenth century ever promised us, while we lost nothing whatever, if it had given us, not a Revolt, but

a Reformation, such as the Church had often made before when needed?

The outcry against the "Plague of Controversy" comes often from statesmen and men of the world. May not these men ask whether, but for the passions then engendered, many political crimes would not have been spared? Would Mary of Scotland, who has never been accused of persecuting, have been driven into exile by her rebellious nobles, detained in prison for nineteen years by Elizabeth, who had no jurisdiction over her, and who had herself, after a trial marked by every circumstance of wrong, pronounced that nothing had been proved against her? Would that lifelong captivity have been closed by a bloody death? If the Puritan rage against "Popery and Prelacy" had not embittered the contest between Charles the First and his subjects, would not English liberty have been vindicated without its being stained by royal blood? Had the Religious Revolution nothing to do with the massacres inflicted by Henry the Eighth on the helpless peasants who, in successive revolts, resisted the suppression of their faith, and the dissolution of the monasteries at whose gates they had received bread?[1] Had it no connection with the excesses of the German Anabaptists, the persecutions of the Scotch Covenanters, and the long religious wars on the Continent? Was not the Stuart despotism a calamity transmitted from that of the

[1] See "Historical Sketches of the Reformation," by the Rev. F. G. Lee, D.D.

Tudors, when the balance of power was destroyed, the whole ecclesiastical as well as the civil authority having been absorbed by the Crown, as the authority of the great nobles had been suppressed by Henry the Seventh? Was it not to this Oriental despotism, then first created in the West, and to the violence of religious passions, that Ireland owed those penal laws which racked her from the days of Elizabeth to those of George the Third, and the remoter consequences of which still trouble the relations of two countries neither of which can dispense with the other?

These are among the things which we should have escaped but for a Revolution which created deeper abuses than those it professed to reform. The great northern kingdom would not have been isolated in Faith. Erastianism would not have prevailed in France, Spain, and later in Austria, with its invariable consequences, a diminished faith, and impaired morality. Science and Religion would no more have looked on each other with jealousy than they did when Copernicus dedicated his great book to the Pope at that Pope's request. Monasteries, the reduced wealth of which would no longer have tempted the great nobles to send their sons to them without a vocation, would have produced more frequently than before its Roger Bacon, or its Fra Angelico; whilst such as were superfluous would have changed into schools, colleges, missionary establishments, hospitals, or abodes for the sustentation of the poor through an agency not debasing but elevating,

and strong in the strength at once of combined action and of a Divine motive. Society would then have made that true progress only possible where knowledge and liberty advance side by side with faith and charity. The world would have seen a true "Pax Romana"—not the boast of that Augustan Empire which was based on material aims, but the fulfilled promise of that Christian kingdom the gifts of which are spiritual.

These are the things which we have missed. Why not win them yet? The greatest of England's recent poets ended a very awful warning with this demand—"Is there any hope?" The Roman Catholic's answer to that question must be, "Yes; a great hope." It is a hope connected with that "Plague of Controversy" which, when seen at its better side, is but the spirit of "free inquiry." England was once named "The Isle of Saints;" but many of her glories, it is but just to say, belong to the present century, during which not a few bad courses, long vindicated by able men, have given place to better things. For a long time despotic government, when strong and successful, like that of the Tudors, was popular in England; but now it is hated in all its forms. Religious persecution, again, was for centuries approved in nearly all countries, the statesman's maxim being "Cujus est Regio illius est Religio?" and both Milton and Locke justified penal laws against Catholics. Those laws passed away, though for another long period dissentients from the Church Establishment were refused all share in

the making of the laws they obeyed. The African slave trade was long tolerated; and its noble-hearted opponents, such as Clarkson and Wilberforce, were deemed enthusiasts. At last England flung off that opprobrium "like dew-drops from the lion's mane." Later West Indian slavery was abolished, and the nation willingly payed twenty millions in discharge of that holy debt. These changes prove that England, though tenacious of its opinions, has yet risen above strong prejudices, assisted by many among her men of letters, such as Hallam, Dr. Maitland, and Macaulay. It is remarkable that this true progress consisted chiefly in the repudiation of abuses which falsely pretended to a venerable antiquity. The protest made by the nineteenth century was one against but new-old innovations. Its chief claims were made on behalf of the "constitution," its chief appeals to "Magna Charta," and the laws of Edward the Confessor and Alfred. It would be no marvel if the same nation chose to compare once more, and in spiritual things not political, the spurious antiquity with the real, and if it preferred the real. Unprejudiced and charitable inquiry is an easier thing than it has been for a long time. No "Pretenders" are in the field, and no foreign nations have any interest connected with our religious divisions. Experience has taught us that no religion can be strengthened long either by force or by fraud; and that for any temporary aid from these crimes a terrible price has to be paid at the end. The Church has long since learned that religion's

most formidable enemies are anarchy on the one hand and despotism on the other, whether the despot be an individual or a people; and that her best friend is freedom, not wealth. It is to the increase of thoughtfulness, of charity, and of knowledge that Catholics look for the progress of truth; and in England few of them would join the Dissenters in any movement for the secularisation of England's very moderate religious endowments. What they desire is that their country's spiritual destinies should be allowed to work themselves out freely, through conscience and reason, with no interference from without, and in such sort as to leave no heartburnings behind.

There exists at present one special reason why every English patriot should regard earnest religious inquiry, not as an affront against his country, but as a duty of loyalty to her. The Sectarian spirit has given place to the Rationalistic; and the Rationalistic is daily giving place to the Agnostic. The patriot and the Christian are bound to be helpful to their fellow-countrymen. Every day some youth, too ignorant to know his own ignorance, comes to "the meeting of the ways." All good men should warn him, when they have learned the lesson themselves, not to take the wrong turn. But to do this effectually they must cast aside prejudices and a merely national tradition, for it is only to the advice of reasonable and devout men that ardent inquirers will listen. One of these two ways is a narrow way, but it leads upwards; the other is broad and smooth,

but it leads downward. Many a man takes the latter road, without even perceiving that the former exists, and finds himself soon after among a race who have surreptitiously or unconsciously sophisticated the meaning of language, "West" meaning "East," and "North" meaning "South," so that the wanderer, having lost the points of the compass, has no means of re-discovering his way. They have to warn him thus, or they will expose him to an injury worse than that which their fathers sustained from the careless ones of the sixteenth century. Long after that time, many among that vast majority who, at Elizabeth's accession, were Catholics, as Mr. Froude tells us, had been cheated out of their faith; but they were less offenders than men offended against, and nearly all claimed the name of Christians. How many who now claim that name are Sceptics, and cry, "We cannot put our hand out without meeting a limit, or look at either side without seeing a precipice, or tread except as men living in a house of cards —one which may at any moment fall on our heads!" How many are Disbelievers—a term very different from that of Sceptics. How many are Materialists. How many are Agnostics, and say, with a pride of ignorance greater than any pride of knowledge, that no human faculties *can* know whether there exists a God, a Soul, or an Immortality. Amid the boasted enlightenment of the nineteenth century—the descendants of those who professed to break in a moment the bonds of twelve centuries—the mind, so active as

to terrestrial things, when directed to the supernal sphere, simply refuses longer to act. The most thoughtful are often those who most obstinately refuse; for such persons cannot, as easily as others, think themselves into illusory consolations. Such men are not to be blamed for declining to advance farther into a wilderness; but they seem self-accused for disdaining to retrace their steps. Agnosticism, it is true, may be a transient thing, or an inherited misfortune; or the heart may be wiser than the head, and its victim may do himself an injustice in taking the name. But confirmed Agnosticism is the only form of mental error which wholly rejects Hope. In the absence of Hope, the Agnostic Intellect discovers daily, even though it may not admit the fact, that the chains which, in its fever, it dragged off were its clothes; and self-folded, dim-eyed, and cold, a gloomy barbarian, it sits watching the embers of a fire which has burned itself out. And yet but to put forth a hand would be to touch the gate;—to lift up the eyes in humility would be to find rest in the paternal home.

V.

THE GREAT PROBLEM OF THE XIXTH CENTURY, AND "LUX MUNDI."

THE great religious problem of the age is the relation in which Revealed Religion stands to Inductive Science and to Biblical criticism; and on its solution depends that of the age's lesser problems. "Lux Mundi" has attracted an immense interest, because it draws that problem very near to men. There are critical periods in the history of thought as well as in that of nations. Among the former was that "High Church" movement which began at Oxford nearly sixty years ago with the publication of "Tracts for the Times," and which excited so much interest among thoughtful persons and so much ridicule among the superficial. The second of these periods was that of the "Gorham Judgment." It produced a whole literature of pamphlets, and soon afterwards a large secession from the Established Church, including several teachers who had been among its brightest ornaments, and the chief of whom have long since recovered in public estimation more than they had lost for a time. The third was

occasioned by the publication of "Essays and Reviews," a book the utterances of which were not less important in their consequences on the faith of many readers than was the Gorham Judgment, though less palpable at the moment, and of a different sort. The book was denounced alike by the Evangelical and the High Church body; but the judgment pronounced on it by the "Crown in Council" was regarded as virtually an acquittal, notwithstanding that the Convocation of Canterbury had formally enumerated twelve doctrines of primary moment, "denied, called in question, or disparaged" by it. That judgment has been compendiously described as

> A declaration that to deny the inspiration of any portion of the New or Old Testament, so long as no entire book is thereby erased from the Canon, is not at variance with the articles or formularies of the Church of England.[1]

After that judgment an essential change, one already in progress, advanced with an accelerated speed. At first the "High Church" school had claimed to be, and was regarded by many as, the authentic representative of Anglican orthodoxy. After that judgment it was commonly regarded as but one of several contending schools, all of them alike tolerated in the Established Church. Notwithstanding, that school continued to advance in spite of much persecution and calumny. That progress was attributed by its enemies to human credulity, and

[1] See Cardinal Manning's "England and Christendom" (p. 22).

the attractions of a gorgeous ritual. It was in reality occasioned chiefly by the unquestioned sanction which "Anglican" principles received from the English Prayer Book, and antiquity, in spite of their momentous omissions; and it was yet more produced by the energy and self-sacrifice with which the assertors of those principles laboured, especially among the poor in the slums and alleys of the great cities. Their teaching had, moreover, enriched English intellects with many forgotten truths. The advocates of the "Broad school" boast that their system opens out a platform for the largest number of disciples; but that space happens to be occupied by the smallest number of zealous adherents. The votaries of religious bodies outnumber the "broad" philosophers. This is not wonderful. Dogmas are but doctrines; and sound religious doctrines are the highest truths on the highest subjects. By true and thoughtful believers they are loved as spiritual helps and consolations, not disliked as hindrances, barriers, or limitations. The largest of religious bodies is that one which abounds in them most, though it also addresses itself most to the poor.

The High Church school continued to make way. Keble published his "Eucharistic Adoration," and what had been too long but a vague theory respecting a Real Presence left undefined, became a soul-subduing reality. The authentic idea of Christian worship was thus largely restored, and with it a proportionately deeper appreciation of the Christian

creed. Where "The Mass is idolatry" had long been the cry, High Churchmen called their communion office "The Mass." Confession was preached by Dr. Pusey and others, with an ever-increasing plainness; and parents recognised in it a most helpful protection against sin. The old English divines of the seventeenth century, the unquestioned founders of English eloquence and, in a large measure, of the best English philosophy, were read again, and also the writers of Catholic countries who carried "Church principles" to their legitimate conclusions: new churches rose up daily, ecclesiastical architecture and music were revived, and even the Dissenters caught something of a higher spirit and admitted organs into more church-like chapels. But to this fair picture unhappily there was a darker side also. Erastianism had advanced also. The Ecclesiastical Courts encountered what was denounced as serious injury. The Sovereign still receives in the Episcopal Oath of Homage the distinct profession of a spiritual as well as of a civil obedience. A purely civil court pronounces as to what is or is not by law within the limits of Anglican orthodoxy. Parliament, since the Sovereign acts through it practically, though not in name, appoints the bishops, and has on several occasions suppressed bishoprics; and Parliament, which had long ceased to be in profession a Church of England assembly, has, since the admission of the Jews, ceased to be by necessity a Christian one, and since the admission of avowed atheists has

ceased to be by necessity even a Theistic one; yet it still legislates on religious as well as secular subjects! It has legalised divorce, and to a large extent secularised university education. Latitudinarianism and Rationalism have made way as well as Church principles; and not these only, but Agnosticism itself. Thus in England there have been two tides of opinion, running, one of them, in the direction of spiritual authority and "Dogma," and the other in that of an unbelief which no longer wears a mask. It is, however, but just to admit that the ever-advancing Erastianism proceeds from no arbitrary disposition on the part of the State, nor from any desire to meddle with matters beyond her sphere. It is a prediction fulfilled. Cardinal Newman affirmed long since, that a merely national church must be national in the first place and afterwards only as much of a church as it can afford to be.

Apparently we are come to a "new departure." If the "Essays and Reviews" marked a crisis, another book, "Lux Mundi," marks one more serious far; for in it principles respecting "Biblical Inspiration," alarmingly like many though not all, of those put forward by the "Broad school," are asserted by prominent members of the High Church school, who in other matters differ wholly from the writers of the earlier work, and belong to the dogmatical and ecclesiastical teaching. In the resemblance of the two books, as well as in their diversity, there is a great significance. "Lux Mundi," like the "Essays and

Reviews," has its ardent admirers and its zealous opponents; and it is said to have gone through fifteen large editions in the two years since its publication. It has been discussed in most of the periodicals. It abounds in eloquence as well as in thought, the eloquence of sincere conviction; its spirit is for the most part reverent and its tone conciliating. To this, however, there is at least one important exception which demands notice.

The Essay in "Lux Mundi," entitled "The Holy Spirit and Inspiration," includes at page 327 (3rd Edition) a charge so entirely random and so plainly founded on misconception, that its non-retractation in the next edition seems strange. It is as follows:—

> When Christianity adopts, as in the modern Romanist system, a different tone proscribing free inquiry as rationalistic, and making the appeal to Antiquity "a treason and a heresy," it is abjuring its own rational heritage, and adopting a method which Charles Kingsley had good reason to call Manichean.

To this passage is appended a note referring to four passages in a work by one whom England has but lately lamented, Cardinal Manning's "Temporal Mission of the Holy Ghost." The teaching is identical in these four passages: it will suffice therefore here to give the whole of that one from which the isolated expressions cited in this Essay are taken. It is as follows:—

> As soon as I perceived the Divine fact that the Holy Spirit of God has united Himself indissolubly to the mystical body, or Church of Jesus Christ, I saw at once that the interpretations or

doctrines of the living Church are true, because divine, and that the voice of the living Church in all ages is the sole rule of faith, and infallible, *because it is the voice of* a *Divine Person*. I then saw that all appeals to Scripture alone, or to Scripture and Antiquity, whether by individuals or by local Churches, are no more than appeals from the *divine voice* of the Living Church, and therefore essentially rationalistic.—*Temporal Mission of the Holy Ghost* (p. 29).

Again, he says (p. 238):—

The doctrines of the Church in all ages are primitive. It was the charge of the Reformers that the Catholic doctrines were not primitive, and their pretension was to revert to Antiquity. But the appeal to Antiquity is both a treason and a heresy. It is a treason because it rejects the Divine voice of the Church at this hour, and a heresy because it denies that voice to be Divine. *How can we know what Antiquity was except through the Church?*

The Cardinal does not here depreciate antiquity, but he exalts that which belongs, not to time but to eternity, while what he censures is an untrue *allegation* respecting antiquity. What his assailant calls "the Modern Romanist System" is simply that of the Church from the beginning, which rejected, as did all its general Councils, from its Communion those sects that persistently rejected its teaching when defined and proclaimed, whether they rejected it as unscriptural, or as opposed to antiquity, both of which charges were brought by Arius against the doctrine of the Trinity. One great principle is affirmed and re-affirmed throughout the whole of the Cardinal's work, and here is plainly insisted on in the words, "rejects the *Divine Voice*." It is this, that no merely human authority,

whether that of individual judgment or that of a national conclave, can lawfully rule in the Kingdom of Faith. Both these are fallible; and the soul needs certainty. It is the Holy Spirit Who speaks in the Church's Creed. To reject that voice is not justified by a pretext. "It hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and unto us."

The author of this essay, though attached to "Church principles," seems to have never grasped the idea of the Church's authority as regards doctrine. He affirms it only in such a sense as virtually to negative it. A real "Ecclesia docens" seems to him to disparage individuality; and he quotes several texts, which the Church insists on not less, but which he interprets very much as Puritans and Dissenters do. After saying, ("Lux Mundi," p. 324), "Thus to keep the traditions is at all times, and not least in Scripture, a common Christian exhortation," he proceeds:—

> But this common tradition is not meant to be a merely external law. It is meant to pass by the ordinary processes of education into the individual consciousness, and there, because it represents truth, to impart freedom.

Now this, if read in the Catholic sense, is just what a Catholic constantly hears from the Church, but the context shows that it is meant in a sense not true, because it is but a half truth. It is part of the writer's praise of "Individuality," which the Church is accused of crushing. On the contrary, her great traditional creed is so far from being a merely external law that

she accounts it valueless to those for whom it is not a great internal power, blending with the very depths of "Individual consciousness," and bearing fruit in the whole regenerate life. The writer proceeds:—

"St. Paul speaks of the developed Christian, the man who is spiritual" as "judging all things, and himself judged of none;" and St. John makes the ground of Christian certainty to lie, not in an external authority, but in a personal gift: "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things, ye need not that any one teach you."

But the interpretation is here again amiss. St. Paul did claim to be a teacher, and affirmed, not that a regenerate individualism was the "pillar and the ground of the truth," but that the Church, that is the "One Body" with the "One Spirit," was such. And St. John said:—

"We (he means the Apostolic Rulers of the Church) are of God; he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us."

Those that have an unction are those who derive it from the Church living in her unity, through her one faith and her world-wide charity. St. Paul teaches that there are diversities of gifts, and that some are the teachers and some the taught. Both classes have an unction, but the grace which makes the believer does not by necessity make the prophet, the apostle, or the judge of doctrine. The Church propounds the right faith, teaching the nations as the apostles were commanded to teach them; but she would teach in vain, as she constantly reminds us, if those that heard

her message had not, from the Holy Spirit Who dwells in her, that high unction which alone enables them "spiritually to discern" that message. Very different from this is the essayist's conception of the Church and her children. He says:—

> It is the reaction of the individual on the Society which is to keep the common tradition pure and unnarrowed. The individual illumination is thus to react as a purifying force upon the common mind of the Christian society. Such are the influences which ward off in each generation that tendency to deteriorate and to become materialised which belongs to all traditions (p. 326).

But the Church is not a mere human society; it is because she is the Body of Christ and the Temple of the Spirit that such tendencies can take no permanent hold of her. Doubtless her holier sons have often so aided her, both by denouncing abuses, and initiating great spiritual enterprises, as amply to pay "the debt of their education," but those sons have not been men who fancied that they had a mission to "reform" the Church's theological teaching. "If any man comes to us, and says that he has studied and assimilated the Christian creed with all the care and reverence in his ability" (the essayist tells us), "and has rejected it because he finds it irrational and false, we cannot complain of him" ("Lux Mundi," p. 327). The Apostles did complain of such, for they spoke of a gospel which was hidden from them that are lost, and so does the Apostolic Church. That is, she "speaks with authority" Religious bodies which do not

claim to be the Church, but merely a separated "branch" of it, must either claim a doctrinal authority and a religious certainty which cannot be theirs, or frankly confess that their claim, even in the gravest matters of doctrine, is no more than that of giving advice which no one is bound in conscience to take. The same confused and incoherent teaching is found in that chapter of Mr. Gore's Bampton Lectures which compares rhetorically, but not theologically, the Catholic with the Anglican "Rule of Faith."

To return from a digression necessary to prevent a complete misconception respecting the Catholic principle of authority in matters of Faith, the chief question raised in "Lux Mundi" is one the seriousness of which at the present time cannot be overrated. When the new teaching respecting the 'Biblical Inspiration" was first put forth by members of the "Broad school," many readers said, "This was to be expected. The direction in which a tree leans is that in which it will fall." When "Lux Mundi" appeared, many must have asked "What security remains to us now, when 'High Church' teachers whose theology had previously rested on the joint authority of the Church and of Holy Scripture, come forward in a new character, and themselves direct our attention to painful difficulties, recently discovered, it would seem, in Holy Scripture, difficulties which regard, not its interpretation merely, but its inspiration as we have hitherto understood that term. They have apparently elaborated some new theory respecting

the nature of inspiration; but they do not refer us to any Divine authority through which we can reach any certainty as to whether that theory is the truth or not." Dr. Liddon's opposition to the new teaching on this subject was a cry of distress, and a profoundly pathetic one. The Divine Inspiration of Holy Scripture is not merely a Christian *Doctrine*. It is one of the transcendent *Mysteries* affirmed in the Church's Creed, being virtually included in the clause, "Who spake by the Prophets."

It may be well here to state that in the following remarks no attempt will be made to deal with the question of Biblical Inspiration, except as it affects the religious position of English thinkers and schools. On Inspiration itself two momentous definitions were made by the Vatican Council before the subject of the Papal Infallibility had been approached; and while much declamation has been wasted on the latter question, but little attention has been spent upon these two earlier definitions by those whom they most closely concern, and for whose protection they were probably made in part, as well as for the guidance of the Church's children. These two definitions, which but repeat the teaching of the Tridentine Council, affirm that the Canonical Scriptures are Divinely inspired *in their totality*, and not merely in large portions of them; and again, that they have *God for their author*. That brief statement will suffice as a preliminary to the much humbler question at present before us. Regarding that humbler question,

not from a speculative, but from a practical point of view, the following remarks are intended to indicate that a very present help is at hand for such as are not too proud to use it; that man's need of that help was never so clearly attested as it is now through the triumphs of modern intellect; that the Word of God, anticipating that need, expressly and repeatedly refers us to the sole protection against the dangers that now threaten faith, and also to the means by which we can reach all that additional knowledge by man so imperfectly explored as yet. Revelation is not, as some fancy, a bond, half broken and hanging loose about us, but a supreme hope rich in gifts still in store for us. It is the ladder promised to man from his first creation, by which our spiritual explorers have ascended thus high—not one to be now contemptuously kicked over, as superfluous henceforth, but one to be carried with them on and up, one without which they can neither climb the precipices which still intercept their ascent to the heights, nor effect a safe descent. For four thousand years and more, man was allowed to put forth all the strength of his faculties, and show to what he could attain, and what was his limit. Then the primal promise, that of the Incarnation, was fulfilled, and the gates of a spiritual universe were flung open before him. He discerned it—most of it stretching away into infinity—much of it nearer to him than the material world already his, and in part subdued to his use. The danger before us is no less than the loss of that Spiritual Universe,

the "Kingdom of God," through the abuse of man's lesser gifts. The safeguards against that danger are God's Word and God's Church, its authentic interpreter. Some are distressed or angry at being told that Revelation does not come to them exclusively from the Written Word; but a man's inheritance is not the less his because it has been bequeathed to him in two forms of property—mutually supplemental.

Whence do our present religious difficulties arise? A few centuries ago a religious change took place with extraordinary rapidity. Battles between the "Regale" and the "Pontificale" had been of frequent recurrence, subsequently to the Norman Conquest; but they had related more to investitures, patronage, and Church property than to doctrine. It was so no longer. Amid the crash of down-falling abbey roofs polemical cries were heard. The new opinions did not meet with any sanction from the ancient Rule of Faith; and a new Rule of a very ambiguous character was extemporised—that of individual opinion. Its initiators would have been surprised if any one had told them how much more they were about to effect than they intended. A man who only desires to get rid of his waste papers may discover that he has burned the title-deeds to his estate; and men of science assure us that a canal easily cut might, by the draining away of an inland sea or by the formation of a new one where sandy deserts had previously spread, alter the climate of remote continents. Some of the

new teachers acted under severe pressure from despotic sovereigns; some under the semi-pagan influence of the "Renaissance;" some under sincere religious enthusiasm; but most of them probably believed that the result of the spiritual revolution, then substituted for reform, as later in the case of the first French Revolution, while it abolished many abuses, and gave a scope to contending opinions, would leave untouched the great creeds of the early Church. Since then time has spoken, and unexpected elements are discovered to have existed latently in what to a blind confidence had seemed so little alarming. The real work of reform then necessary was one which could only have been worthily undertaken by a General Council acting in entire freedom. Such a Council, called in time, would have consolidated Christendom, and prepared it for new and higher destinies; but it was early discovered that "General Councils may not be gathered together without the commandment and will of princes," and England, detached from the unity of Christendom without her own desire by a series of acts the joint effect of which was not foreseen, found a new ecclesiastical constitution established "over its head"—one as different from that which had preceded it as a Republic is different from a Monarchy. Great troubles followed this experiment, and several revolutions, both political and spiritual; but we are now concerned only with the latest of these. It was intimately connected with the first, the so-called "Reformation," though no one

anticipated that the earlier must occasion the later. The later is upon us now.

Beside the cradle of that "Reformation," the greatest revolution the world has yet known, two dragons had kept watch unseen; but the Infant Hercules neither marked them nor was strong enough to strangle them. The Portents waited and watched, and their day has arrived. They are only perilous to those who see no danger in them, and who have been deprived of the one sure protection against it, the Church's "Sacramentum Unitatis." Those two Portents are Biblical Criticism and that portion of Inductive Science which treads the border land between science and religion. These two things ought to have proved friends to Faith; but great gifts may reverse their functions when circumstances have placed them in false relations with other gifts. The question at issue is whether that new knowledge which knocks at our doors is to assail or sustain Revealed Religion; and the answer to it depends on another, viz., What is the right method and "Organon" for the acquisition of Religious knowledge?

The alternative lies between individualism and corporate action. But we must never confound mere individualism with personal action. Of course the exercise of all the virtues, religious or moral, is a *personal* act, and in regard to these no individual can devolve his duties on his neighbour. Each person has to exercise faith, hope, and charity for himself; no one can do this for him. But the building up of

that great theological creed respecting which each individual has to exercise that personal faith is another matter. What is the right "method" for the theological inquirer? Bacon taught us that in natural science that method is Induction. There the individual can work now by himself and now with others as he pleases. Theology also must use a right philosophic method if it is to reach true conclusions. The method could not there be that of Induction; for, like the great world of metaphysical thought, Revelation does not admit of being tested by physical experiment. Revelation affirmed from the first that it was a gift to the human race, and to the individual only through the human race restored in its second Head to that unity the symbol of which was His seamless robe. When He had passed from earth, and later when the Apostles had died, His Church ruled in His place; authenticated the Canonical Scriptures; collected them into a single Bible; and defined disputed truths in her General Councils. She gave us the creed; converted the world to that creed, in substance unchanged and unchangeable, but illustrating its primal truths with new definitions as new errors required them, and thus, in one sense, progressive as science is. If she authenticated the Scriptures, has she nothing to say as to their Inspiration? That problem is for her, and for her alone.

But what was the method of that progressive theological knowledge? It was, in the main,

deductive, not inductive. That process was rendered possible only through the creation of that regenerated Humanity, the Church, an act nearly simultaneous with the great Redemptive Act. The primary verities immediately fixed in her (the Church's) mind were to her what postulates and axioms are in mathematics; and the Church in making her deductions from these was guarded from error by the indwelling Spirit sent to her at Pentecost, and abiding with her for ever, not only to recall all things to her mind, but also to lead her on into all truth.

If such be the Church, her children can have nothing to fear and must have much to gain from sound Biblical criticism. Her creed was hers before a line of the New Testament was written. Her Faith is abundantly illustrated by that sacred volume, but it rests also on another foundation, and is hers independently of it. An apostle's doctrine was equally accepted by his converts, whether delivered to them orally alone or embodied in an Epistle. The Church's teaching is equally accepted by those of her sons who can read, and those who cannot read.

Very remarkable is the degree in which the practical question at issue is often lost sight of. A logical error is made in "the distribution of the subject." The real question begins after it has been conceded, first, that the inspiration of Holy Scripture does not mean a verbal inspiration, and secondly, that Holy Scripture was not intended to instruct us in natural

philosophy or chronology apart from the true subject-matter of Revelation.

The will and ways of God, and the relation of man's soul to Him, constitute, it will be acknowledged, that subject matter; and according to Catholic teaching, as all instructed persons know, the inspired Scriptures must, when interpreted by the Spirit Who inspired them speaking through God's Church, impart to men a knowledge infallibly guarded from error on (to say the least) 1st, Doctrine; 2nd, Morals; and 3rd, Dogmatic Facts, such as the Incarnation, the Resurrection, &c., *i.e.*, facts which include doctrine.

The interests of knowledge not less than those of faith require that in our search after new knowledge we should remain secure against the loss of the best knowledge already ours. Without such a security we may change, but we cannot make progress, just as we cannot raise the wall unless the square and plummet protect us from building out of the perpendicular. Religious and scientific knowledge are friends, not rivals; but the best friends must respect each the rights of the other. The more care is here needed because the respective spheres of religion and science, though distinct, are not separate. They have their points of intersection. Each is knowledge, though the knowledge is one of two different sorts. Let us apply this both to Biblical Criticism and to inductive science in their relations to faith. In carrying out his investigations on that subject the Catholic inquirer has one immeasurable advantage. He begins with a definite

creed, and he is not tempted to discard it since, so far as that creed is concerned, his knowledge is not that of mere probability but of certainty. This certainty makes the difference between faith and opinion. For the Catholic a doctrine remains secure even when a text commonly quoted in support of it seems to be uncertain, for the doctrine itself lives on in the consciousness of the Church as it lived before that text was written. In the sects religious opinion is founded almost wholly on texts: but those very texts are themselves as open to criticism as any other texts. While the student of Biblical Criticism is making his inquiries as to the authenticity of texts, he cannot rest his theological convictions on them, because they are themselves witnesses on their trial. Those Anglicans who appealed to ecclesiastical authority as well as to the Bible, in past times, boasted that theirs was a ship that rode at two anchors, while the ships of the other sects had but one each. The High Church school, before the German criticism had much affected England, thus possessed a great advantage over the "Broad Church" school. It loses that advantage in proportion as its members put forward new and vague opinions respecting inspired Scripture, without advancing to any more definite conception of Church authority. It is eloquent while writing on the Church, but the actual question at issue is "*evitata fervidis reris*," while the only Body which even professes to be organically one, and to speak by the One Spirit, is stigmatised by it as a "modern system." The real

question is that of Certainty in religion *versus* that of philosophic Opinion concerning religion. The creeds begin with the words "I believe," not "I think." From the first the one Book among books, and the one Polity among polities, were open, each of them, to much criticism, and criticism in a remarkable degree of the same character; and to this day such epithets as "dogmatic," "arbitrary," "imperious," "equivocal," "mystical," are applied impartially to both, while the inspiration of the great Book, and the infallibility of the great Polity, present to some minds very similar difficulties, especially as regards the exact definition of each of these attributes; but notwithstanding, it is "in the mouth of two witnesses" that truth is established. From the first the Word of God and the Kingdom of God rested on the same great idea—that of a supernatural order crowning the natural order. They both affirmed that the Pentecostal effusion of the Holy Spirit was no mere transient fact, but, like the Incarnation of the Second Person, an eternal mystery, perpetually fruitful in good to man. The Anglican High Church school had grasped a great idea, even if but with the uncertain grasp of a child. If, instead of trafficking boldly with the treasure, it hides its talent in a napkin, would it not be wise to defer the discussion of those two great problems of modern times, with which it has not, in its present isolation, strength to deal? Not every one can bend the bow of Ulysses.

In the meantime, how fare those who raised

loudest the cry, "The Bible the religion of Protestants"? Some carry a "light heart" with them and say that the work of their fathers must be completed, and the Bible dealt with as the Church was. Not so the more thoughtful and the more reverent. It is on that Bible that all the spirits of criticism have at last descended, or to which they are directing their course; and among the religious bodies withdrawn from unity, many who watch their flight have ever in their ears the cry of the Harpies, and that ill-omened voice which warned the Trojan wanderers that a famine would come upon them so sore that they would be reduced to devour their own tables.

Let us next consider a few of the relations of science with religion. Certain scientific theories are advanced:—It is only after the lapse of years that science can pronounce whether these are truths or illusions. But in the meantime, the Church can determine, when this becomes necessary, whether those theories assail the substance of revealed truth, or whether they touch but matters beyond its sphere. It is in vain to urge that the Christian Revelation can never be thus assailed in its essentials, unless there exists some divinely aided witness capable of informing the simple what belongs essentially to the domain of Revelation, that is, of faith, morals, and doctrinal facts, and what lies outside it. Take an instance. If the Church were to decide that the universality of the Deluge is a question *not* included

in the great deposit of the Faith, she would doubtless also decide, notwithstanding, that the descent of the human race from Adam, corresponding with its redemption through the second Adam, Christ, *is* included. Her children, therefore, would know that whatever men of science might hastily accept in opposition to the latter doctrine would one day be disowned by science herself, as so many supposed discoveries have been. Roman Catholics have therefore no anxiety on the subject. The true discovery would not affect the Faith:—the illusory one would one day be detected.

For others, indeed, the danger is far greater than some suspect. They are threatened not only by the actual, but by the possible results of scientific inquiry. The believer is summoned to suspend his belief until the last new scientific theory has been proved or disproved. But that inquiry may last for centuries, and man's life is short. While the inquiry lasts, little remains to one whose religion rests but on individual opinion, except a crippled conditional belief—one that escapes him like a handful of sand which oozes out between the fingers the more rapidly the more closely they endeavour to clasp it. It is a sad thing when each text, or each doctrine, still retained by those who would fain be faithful, is but a fortress that holds out with a conditional loyalty, and only till summoned to surrender by an invader whose strength it is not easy to calculate beforehand.

In that Church, which, in matters of revealed religion, is by her children recognised as "The Pillar and

the ground of the Truth," there is no room for such anxieties. She can afford to rejoice in all true scientific progress. But she can afford also to say, "Science is not bound by all that is affirmed in its name."

To disparage the inspiration of Holy Scripture, as hitherto understood in England, and at the same time to set scornfully aside the Catholic Rule of Faith, owing to strange misconceptions respecting it, is at once to expose troubled minds to signal dangers, and also to deprive them of those especial aids providentially accorded to them to meet the present crisis in the world of theological thought. If those whose Polar Star is just now hidden in clouds are also advised to throw the ship's compass overboard, what remains for the mariner who hears breakers ahead? A voice only, and one not cheerful: "Nudus in ignota, Palinurus, jacebis arena."

It is not the Revealed Faith, it is the unproved, though plausible, theory which men are bound to hold only conditionally till it has been proved. This is the interest of science itself. Such statements are met by the cry of "Priestcraft." The Ptolemaic system of the universe did not come from priests, but from men of science. It held its own for above a thousand years; and then it was discovered by a Catholic priest, Copernicus, to be a mistake. He did not publish his discovery for thirty-six years after he had made it, fearful lest it might prove fallacious, and if fallacious, mischievous; and then he published it at the urgency of great ecclesiastics, and at the

command, as well as with the permission of the reigning Pope, who directed that the book should be dedicated to himself. Bacon, and later Milton, spoke with doubt as to the Copernican theory. Confidence grows more rapidly in our day. It is now sometimes confidently affirmed that the sun and stars must in time lose their light and heat. A letter from a true philosopher, Sir William Rowen Hamilton, late Astronomer-Royal of Ireland, written in a very different spirit, will be found in the admirable biography of him by the Rev. Robert Perceval Graves. It remarks that we must wait patiently till the farther progress of science discovers what is that recuperative force which restores their light. If a similar patience is recommended as a duty to religion, the answer is sometimes a sneer. Yet the loss occasioned by a false scientific theory, even if the error should eventually be detected, may be irreparable. The habit of religious doubt may have been formed, and in that case a second illusory discovery will soon take the place of its predecessor. Religious truth can never be impugned, we are told, by scientific truth. No doubt; but it may be impugned by scientific error; and the ordinary progress of scientific knowledge is through partial error to truth.

Scientific theories claim no more than probability till they have been demonstrated by time and the consent, practically universal, of scientific men—such a consent as has but lately condemned Newton's corpuscular theory of light. On the other hand, it is

Certainty, not probability, which the Holy Scriptures claim for Revelation; and it is the Church that makes good that claim. Those who have not that certainty fear science, and fear also to resist the most rash claim made in her name. The difficulty which besets the non-Catholic student, who has to face the problem of the nineteenth century, under the conditions bequeathed by the sixteenth, is not that of uniting a fixed faith with an inquiring mind: it is that of soaring into the higher regions of truth with one Opinion shorn off. He has a false method of thought in religion, viz., "Private Judgment," and he feels his weakness. That false method is his, not by deliberate philosophic choice, but by inheritance, that is through a local tradition.

England has now to choose whether she will retain her faith in the Bible, and with it her half-restored belief in that sister wonder—a Church whose prime office is that of witnessing to Divine truth with a Divine certainty—or whether it shall be said of her, "The children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth." Two spirits contend within her—that of a faith heart-whole, and that of an unbelief which shelters itself under the decent veil of an equivocal terminology. She has two decisions before her, that of a General Council with its eight hundred prelates, and that of the "Crown in Council."

Some will ask, "If we took the Church's witness as our Rule of Faith respecting questions that stand upon the border ground between science and religion,

will not our position be this, that we shall forfeit the gift which science promises us because we hide our eyes in the sand, and shall run to man for protection because we had no faith in God?" Their position would be the contrary of this. In religion they would not use their eyes the less, because they used also the optic glasses of the Church. For once that scientific progress was retarded it would often be expedited; and more than a rare and brief retardation there could not be wherever the supposed scientific discovery was a real one. From nearly all the sciences no religious anxieties could proceed; and in all of them wise men would exercise the faculties which God has given them without fear, since religion would then possess a divine protection. The Anglican clergy entertained considerable jealousy with respect to geology before the claims of that science were established; and but few will think they were to blame on that account. There is, of course, a single instance in which an erroneous decision was made by a Roman tribunal respecting a text bearing on a mixed question of science and religion; but Cardinal Newman spoke aright when he remarked that to a philosophic mind the wonder must be, not that one such case can be pointed out, but that only one such is found. No well-informed person needs to be reminded that the judgment then delivered possessed none of those "notes" by which an utterance claiming to be infallible is characterised.

The Catholic knows as well as the Rationalist that

science and Biblical Criticism must be ever progressive; but he knows also that their progress can never interfere with the stability of the Church's theology when once formally defined. That great inheritance must ever be as secure as it was in the days of the early martyrs. Besides this immutable faith, there exist in the Church opinions, now on the meaning of a text, now on other matters. Many of these have neither been sanctioned nor condemned by the Church. The Faith neither rests on them nor is jealous of them. Outside her fold this distinction between mere opinions and doctrines defined and certain hardly exists. In the separated bodies the fall of one among these mere opinions may shake down the doctrine that stands next it. In them the anxiety of many is just, and profoundly pathetic.

The Catholic inquirer can have no cause for anxiety. What the Church has already defined respecting Revelation he believes with an explicit faith, and what she may define hereafter with an implicit faith, just as an early convert believed not only what an apostle had already taught him, but also by anticipation what he promised to teach when his disciples were fit for more advanced knowledge. The sciolist may smile at "implicit" faith, but not the true man of science. The peasant often laughs at scientific truths, such as that there are men at the Antipodes, which, as he figures to himself, means that they are standing with their heads down, and that the sun neither rises nor sets. Sense often thus

quarrels with reason, and in like manner reason with faith, chiefly from the superficial not seeing the real point at issue: but reason believes implicitly in the geometry of the future as well as in that of the past; and the separated bodies, much to their credit, not only believe in what the Bible has taught them already, but also in what they may later learn from it. Explicit faith builds on the rock, not the sand; but beneath all true explicit faith there extends an implicit faith, as solid as the planet itself, and as wide.

To return to "Lux Mundi:" The resemblances between it and the "Essays and Reviews" are not — and at this we must all rejoice — more significant than is their diversity, both in their tone and spirit, and in their doctrinal statements.

"Lux Mundi" has no passages like the following in the earlier work:—

> Nor for any of the higher or supernatural views of inspiration is there any foundation in the Gospel or Epistles.

And again:—

> It is possible, and may one day be known that mankind has spread, not from one, but from many centres, over the globe.

Still less has it such statements as the following:—

> When maintaining the Athanasian doctrine of the Trinity, we do not readily recall the verse, "Of that hour knoweth no man, neither the Son, but the Father" (p. 443, 10th edition); or the following, "Still greater difficulties would be introduced into the Gospels by the attempt to identify them with the creeds. We should have to suppose that He (Christ) was and was not tempted; that when He prayed to God He prayed to His Father; He prayed also to Himself."

The principles of that book ("Essays and Reviews") wage practically a war against the supernatural in religion; and too many of its readers have probably carried them out to their legitimate consequences. The mathematician can predict to what point his curve will reach when extended; unfortunately the moral and religious teacher often learns the real scope of his principles only from a younger generation, which has adopted them but which has not inherited those happier traditions with which, in the case of the teacher, they were blended, and by which they were in part neutralised.

But in the "Lux Mundi" also there are many passages, which, as they stand, and unsupplemented, cannot fail to alarm thoughtful readers, while there are others which suggest that the writer felt vaguely, if he did not see clearly, where alone protection against their tendencies was to be found. Here is an example, by a different writer, of the latter class. It deserves very hearty sympathy:—

> Once more, the belief in the Holy Scriptures as inspired requires to be held in context by the belief in the general action of the Holy Spirit upon the Christian society and the individual soul. It is, we may perhaps say, becoming more and more difficult to believe in the Bible without believing in the Church (p. 238).

This is profoundly true; but it falls short of the real point at issue, viz., in what Church we are thus to believe. Is it one whose Articles affirm that General Councils "may err, and sometimes have

erred, even in things pertaining to God"? Here is another excellent passage by the writer last quoted:—

> How irrational it is, considering the intimate links by which the New Testament Canon is bound up with the historic Church, not to accept the mind of the Church, especially when we have its consent down independent lines of Tradition.

Must one not ask again, "What Church"? Is it one that rejects an Article of the Nicene Creed ("Proceeding from the Father and the Son"), denies that either Catholics or Protestants retain the right Baptism, and can hardly claim for herself two out of the four "Notes of the Church" proclaimed in the Nicene Creed, viz., Oneness and Universality? Is it the three "Branch Churches" in union? But they are out of union; and they do not share the modern faith in "Branch Churches." Is it the so-called "Primitive Church"? But none of the Fathers spoke of the Holy Scriptures as the modern critics speak; and several of them spoke of them in a tone more resembling that of those who hold "verbal inspiration." The appeal to the Church is doubtless a sound one; but the answer of the Church is: "If you hold Church principles, obey them:—the great and critical tasks of theology are for the Church. The right order is inverted if isolated members of separated bodies sit in judgment on the Bible," because their conclusions cannot be practically made conditional on the Church's confirmation of them.

If learning, a reverent habit, and a zealous devotion to the Christian faith, all of which qualities are

generally attributed to the author of the essay on Biblical Inspiration, if these things sufficed for his task, doubtless the execution of that task would have corresponded with its author's good intention. Unhappily, it is not so. He not only tells us that large portions of the Old Testament may be "dramatic," but he applies to other portions the name of "Myth," a term which does not designate a special form of composition, such as "dramatic," or "lyrical," but oftener its substance and essential character. We associate "Myths" with the legends of many early nations, and the essayist illustrates the term by these; and though it is only fair to add that he also calls them "inspired," yet that is a word often used in a human as well as in a Divine sense, and by some readers may be interpreted in the former. Here is a passage which may easily be thus interpreted:—

> A myth is not a falsehood: it is a product of mental activity, as instructive and rich as any later product, but its characteristic is that it is not yet distinguished into history and poetry, and philosophy. It is all of these in the germ, as dream and imagination, and thought and experience are fused in the mental furniture of a child's mind . . . "Now has the Jewish history such earlier stage? Does it pass back out of history into myth? In particular, are not its earlier narratives, before the call of Abraham, of the nature of myth, in which we cannot distinguish the historical germ, though we do not at all deny that it exists?" The inspiration of these narratives is as conspicuous as that of any part of Scripture. But is there anything to prevent our regarding these great inspirations about the origin of all things as conveyed to us in that form of myth or allegorical picture, which is the earliest mode in which the mind of man apprehended Truth?

But centuries after Abraham's time, and far apart

from mythic lore on the origin of things, "allegorical pictures" would seem, according to this essay, to have taken the place of authentic history. They are there described as "the attribution to first founders of what is really the remoter result of their "institutions" (p. 352).

> Now historical criticism assures us that this process has been largely at work in the Pentateuch . . . It distinguishes distinct stages in the growth of the law of worship: at least an early stage, such as is represented in "The Book of the Covenant," a second stage in the Book of Deuteronomy, a last stage in the Priestly Code. What we may suppose to have happened is that Moses himself established a certain germ of ceremonial enactment in connection with the ark and its sacred tent, and with the "ten words;" and that this developed always as "the Law of Moses," the whole result being constantly attributed, probably unconsciously, and certainly not from any intention to deceive, to the original founder (p. 353).

Dr. Liddon's comment on these views is—and Dr. Pusey's would probably not have differed from it—

> It is inconceivable that if Deuteronomy and the Chronicles were composed in the manner that is now asserted by some adherents of the new school of criticism, these books could ever have been organs of the Spirit of Truth.

He saw that whether the process described was "conscious perversion," or only the "unconscious idealisation" of history, a book supposed to be largely thus written would not long be regarded as a reliable one, even though quite free from the charge of being an imposture. This essay's estimate of "unconscious idealisation of history," as distinguished from "conscious perversion," is the more

disquieting because it is applied, not to the earlier period of so-called "Myths," but to whole centuries later than Abraham's time, concerning which, the essayist writes in a manner which, even taken by itself, to many will not be reassuring. He says (p. 352)—

> We are, we believe, not wrong in anticipating that the Church will continue to believe and teach that the Old Testament, from Abraham downwards, is really historical.

With "Myths" before Abraham's time, and "unconscious idealisation" in much later times, the meaning of the term "historical" seems here very uncertain, to say the least.

The essay gives us a very frank, but very serious, warning. It says—

> We are asked to make considerable changes in our literary conception of the Scriptures, but not greater changes than were involved in the acceptance of the Heliocentric Astronomy.

The change from the Heliocentric or Ptolemaic to the Copernican system of the universe was the most stupendous one recorded in science, and we are now told that a similar change in theology is close at hand. If so, it may be consummated in less time than that which has elapsed since the "Gorham Judgment." Luther stigmatised the Epistle of St. James as "an epistle of straw;" and others among the German reformers would have excluded several more Epistles from the Canon. By whose hand is the great new spiritual revolution to be completed? The pupils will again out-run the earlier teachers;

and the tendency of much Biblical Criticism in England already seems not so much that of excluding particular books from the Canon, as that of changing the whole Canon into one large "Apocrypha." Is it wise to run any risk of expediting this process? England's protection against such dangers was long thought to consist in the advance of "Church principles," not vague, but such as might provide an authoritative witness, to imperilled doctrine as well as to Biblical inspiration. That such an advance still continues seems indicated by a declaration signed by thirty-eight dignitaries of the Anglican Church, and published in the *Times* during December 1891. It includes this important confession, made by clergymen of many schools of thought:—

> We believe the Holy Scriptures to have this Divine authority on the testimony of the Universal Church, the Spouse, and Body of Christ, the Witness, and Keeper of Holy Writ.

This is a large concession and also a significant statement. Where should we be now if the "One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church" did not exist still, and bear distinct witness still to the inspiration of the same great book which she has so often been charged with fearing and disliking and making null?

A subject of transcendent and world-wide importance lies before us—that of Biblical inspiration considered in its totality. Parts of it have been discussed by Cardinal Newman and other Catholic theologians in entire deference to the ultimate judgment of the Church. Had no such ultimate

authority existed that great man would probably have regarded the theme as one too high for him to touch. Anglicans treating the same theme are thus not like, but unlike, Catholics. They are men holding "High Church" principles, but apparently not reverently appreciating their relation to the present crisis.

In "Lux Mundi," the next essay to that on Inspiration is one entitled "The Church." It says much that is both deep in thought and eloquent from its earnestness: but its omissions suggest the idea of ability cramped by a false position. It tells us that the Church has authority as regards the interpretation of the Scriptures, but it says nothing respecting the four chief "Notes of the Church" asserted in the Nicene Creed. On the contrary, it tells us that "Its (the Church's) truths have indeed spread beyond itself, so that men find them now in *bodies opposed to it, and therefore are perplexed and do not know where their allegiance is really due* (p. 400)." This is a strong statement, and no doubt if the Church's "note" of unity could be dispensed with, or reduced to a unity moral only and not moral and organic both, the same might be alleged with respect to the "note" of apostolicity, and then the sects which do not claim the apostolical succession might claim, notwithstanding, an apostolical authority. This consideration may have suggested to the writer of the essay the following passage. May it prove a prophecy!

> Amid the increasing specialisations of studies, amid all the new discoveries of science and historical criticism, with all the

perplexities that arise as to the interpretation and inspiration of the Bible, now if ever there is need of a Church which, conscious of its own spiritual life, knowing that its spiritual truths have stood the test of centuries, has patience and courage to face all those new facts and see their bearing and take their measure; which all the while shall go on teaching to its children with an absolute but rational authority, the central facts of the spiritual life, and shall never doubt the ultimate unity of all truth (p. 401).

Yes, that is the true solution! Why do those who see thus much fail to see that the first duty of one holding "Church principles," and one who would write on that tremendous subject, "Biblical Inspiration," must be to find the Church thus eloquently described—there is but one claimant to such a description;—and having thus discovered a real, not a nominal, Court of Appeal to which the labours of individual teachers can be referred, then to write his matured thoughts fearlessly, though conditionally, in the consciousness that for one thus guarded, to write strongly need not be to write rashly? If in his judgment no such tribunal now exists and the unity of the Church has been suspended because there are, as there were from the beginning, disputes among Christians, would it not follow from such a theory that, until that lost unity has been restored the time has not come for the handling of so vast a question as Biblical inspiration? Surely the Church alone, not individuals, and individuals at war with each other, can be competent to sit in judgment on the Bible! If the separated bodies be unfit for such an office, must not isolated individuals be more unfit for

it still? Dr. Liddon denounced theories of inspiration in which he saw danger, but he abstained from propounding any complete theory of inspiration himself. He may, or may not, have been satisfied with the usual English sentiment respecting Biblical inspiration; but he had had too long an experience to suppose that mere individual enterprises respecting it, with no authoritative sanction, could fail, unless most carefully guarded, to increase the religious confusion of England and disunite those who, labouring in harmony, had done much for her spiritual progress in spite of great difficulties. Dr. Liddon may also well have thought that if some extremists of the "Broad" school might be held in check by speculations less advanced than their own, many more in the High Church body might very soon be troubled by doubts never known to them before; and he may have feared that principles largely held in two out of the three chief schools of English religious thought might rush, as in Germany, with a fatal speed through a land thus cut adrift a second time from its old traditions. He probably remembered that where theorising is easy, accurate knowledge hard to reach, and inaccurate doctrine most dangerous, prudence becomes a solemn duty and the "inopportune" a vital consideration. There is nothing which a wise inquirer on such delicate subjects should more desiderate for himself than a wholesome control, checking precipitate speculation, especially when addressed to minds unprepared for

them. It is only a Church visibly bearing the notes of the Church, and uniting a divine authority with a parental influence, which can resist pressure, and know when to speak and when to be silent. Father Faber used to speak of England with high praise, hope, and affectionate sympathy on account of the reverence which she still retained for the Holy Scriptures compared with the rudeness with which they had been assailed in Germany. All Anglicans who hold "Church principles" desire the restoration of unity throughout Christendom, and also must know that nothing could more retard that event than a diminished belief in Biblical inspiration. Surely many of them must ask themselves the question, whether it is before or after that happy consummation has taken place that the most arduous of religious subjects can be safely and profitably discussed? The attachment of the English people hitherto has been directed, it may be hoped, more to the Bible than to "Private Judgment," whereas in Germany, there is cause to fear that it has recently been directed far more to Private Judgment than to the Bible. Whatever diminishes England's reverence for the Bible must proportionately diminish her reverence for religion itself, so long and so closely have these two things been entwined in the English mind. No doubt amid the confusions, religious and political, moral and social, as well as the widespread spiritual desolation which must prove the consequence of such a diminished reverence, many of all classes would

seek refuge in the Church of their forefathers; but no true Catholic could desire such an augmentation to her fold if purchased at the cost of a corresponding accession to the ranks of unbelief.

Let us briefly resume what has been here said. Three centuries ago England was withdrawn, not by her own choice but by astutely despotic rulers and disloyally servile parliaments, from ecclesiastical unity. About a century ago many of her sons discovered that mere individual opinion with the Christian name of "Private Judgment" could not charm a consistent and assured theology out of a book alone, even though an inspired book. These persons raised a second protest. This time the protest was not against the Church; it was against "Dogma;" for the grapes were sour. The next generation found that a revealed religion—one neither a mere "law" nor a mere "sentiment," but a revelation of Divine truth resting on faith—could not dispense with revealed doctrines. Then a third cry rose, chiefly in Germany. This time it was neither "Private Judgment" nor "No dogma;" it was "No supernatural," "No Revelation," "No inspiration," "No infallibility." The lesson bequeathed to us by this threefold experience is that what God has joined no man can separate. God has given us two great gifts, viz., the Kingdom of God and the Word of God. To keep the last of these we must keep both. If a nation so long faithful and heroic should retain what abides and recover what has been

lost, she will fulfil a great duty due to the past; she will also use, for higher purposes than she now dreams of, those modern gifts which are her lawful boast, freedom, science, civilisation; and she will ascend to greater heights than she had reached in her olden time. Of course it is possible, on the other hand, to imagine the mind of a nation detaching itself progressively in the pride of science "falsely so called" or of material prosperity, from all vital commerce with spiritual things, and yet continuing to fancy that it was making progress. Such progress would be but that of a planet severed from the bond that since its creation had bound it to its central sun, and rushing blindly straight on with an ever-aggravated swiftness into an ever-deepening night. England has had too great a past not to have a destiny before her far different from this; but before that destiny is fulfilled there are several great problems which she has to solve. The greatest of these is that religious one which now lies before her, but which no religious body can deal with without the most imminent danger, unless it is in religious unity with Christendom and with itself.

If this be the great lesson which recent times have taught us, can it be either wise or righteous for men to turn their eyes away from that lesson and pre-occupy their minds with critical attempts which, however high their abilities and their aspirations, practically ignore facts, and help them and their readers to forget that condition of things bequeathed to them by the

men of the sixteenth century, who assuredly did not hold "Church principles"—a condition which the far nobler men of the seventeenth century were unable to redress? Those critical attempts, even assuming that they should reach some important truths, cannot but mix them up with many errors, and thus may too probably but lead their followers "farther to fare worse." England is summoned to a larger task than that of supplementing, though in a better spirit, the attempt of German individualism to sit in judgment on the Bible. She has to sit in judgment on the very "fast" theology of the great Ecclesiastical Revolution, and to compare its promises with its results; to ascertain whether national independence was indeed, as statesmen then first asserted, inconsistent with the spiritual unity of Christ's Kingdom, and whether a reverence for Holy Scripture was, as zealots assumed, incompatible with a belief that a Divine interpreter had been provided for a Divine book. When England has maturely considered these questions, availing herself of the new lights cast upon them by modern discoveries, and substituting for the "traditions of men" the universal tradition of the Faith, her theologians will advance with a stronger tread and a clearer eye towards the solution of the great "problem of the nineteenth century."

BALLANTYNE PRESS: EDINBURGH AND LONDON.

CATHOLIC THEOLOGICAL UNION
3 0311 00163 2715

WITHDRAWN

2823

BT 774 .D48 1893
De Vere, Aubrey, 1814-1902.
Religious problems of the
nineteenth century

Maryknoll Library

3 0311 [redacted]715